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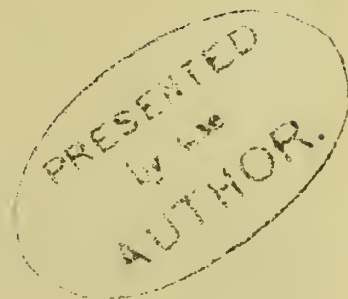


Sketched by R. M'Cormick, R.N.

"Forlorn Hope," running under the lee of Two Icebergs, aground in the Wellington Channel,
in a gale of Wind, 23d August 1852.

15

NARRATIVE
OF A
BOAT EXPEDITION
UP
THE WELLINGTON CHANNEL
In the Year 1852,
UNDER THE
COMMAND OF R. M'CORMICK, R.N., F.R.C.S.,
IN
H.M.B. "FORLORN HOPE,"
IN
SEARCH OF SIR JOHN FRANKLIN;
WITH
CHART, ILLUSTRATIONS, AND PLANS OF SEARCH.



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1854.

DR. M'CORMICK'S BOAT EXPEDITION

UP

THE WELLINGTON CHANNEL,

1852.

NARRATIVE of a BOAT and SLEDGE EXPEDITION up Wellington Channel and round Baring Bay, in search of Sir John Franklin and the crews of the discovery ships
"Erebus" and "Terror."

On Thursday, 19th August 1852, at 11 a.m.,

I SUCCEEDED in embarking upon my long-sought and long-cherished enterprise, in a whale boat equipped for a month, and manned by half-a-dozen volunteers from Her Majesty's ship "North Star," lying off Beechey Island.

Although, it could not be otherwise than a source of the deepest regret to me, that the short season for boating operations in these regions was now fast drawing to a close, and with it the more sanguine hopes I had entertained of accomplishing the extended exploration I had contemplated ere the long polar night set in, yet, even in this, the eleventh hour, I was not without a hope of at least setting at rest one question relative to the search, viz., as to the existence of any available communication between Baring Bay and Jones Sound, either by means of an opening or narrow isthmus of land, in the direction of the position laid down in the Admiralty chart, as the spot where a cairn, cooking place, and footprints, are said to have been visited by a whaler; and have been thought by some, most deeply interested in the fate of our lost countrymen, to have been traces of their wanderings.

This object I fully determined to accomplish, if possible, either by sea or land, even should the formation of "young ice" (so much to be apprehended at this advanced period of the season,) form such an impediment as to leave me no other alternative than to abandon my boat, and make my way back to the ship by an overland journey.

At the very moment I was about taking my departure, a sail hove in sight, coming round Cape Riley, which proved to be no less interesting an arrival than Lady Franklin's own little brigantine, the "Prince Albert," on her return from Batty Bay, in Prince Regent's Inlet, where she had wintered, without finding any traces of the missing expedition. I met her commander,

Kennedy, and Monsicur Bellôt, on the floe as they landed, but so anxious was I to make the most of every moment of the brief remnant of the season still remaining, that I had little time to inquire what they had accomplished.

After despatching a few hastily written lines home by them, I struck across the ice for the floe edge, where my boat was awaiting me; and hoisting the sail with a strong breeze from the S.W., ran alongside of the "Prince Albert," standing off and on between Cape Riley and Beechey Island. Hepburn, the faithful follower and companion of the gallant Franklin in his ever-memorable journey along the shores of the Polar Sea, was on board this little vessel. I had not seen him since our first meeting in Tasmania, on my arrival there,—in the very same "Erebus" of which I am now in search,—whilst engaged in the Antarctic Expedition, at the time Sir John Franklin was governor of the colony. In passing so close I could not resist the impulse to jump on board, and congratulate this spirited old veteran with a hearty shake of the hand on his safe return, thus far, from so arduous an undertaking in search of his old commander.

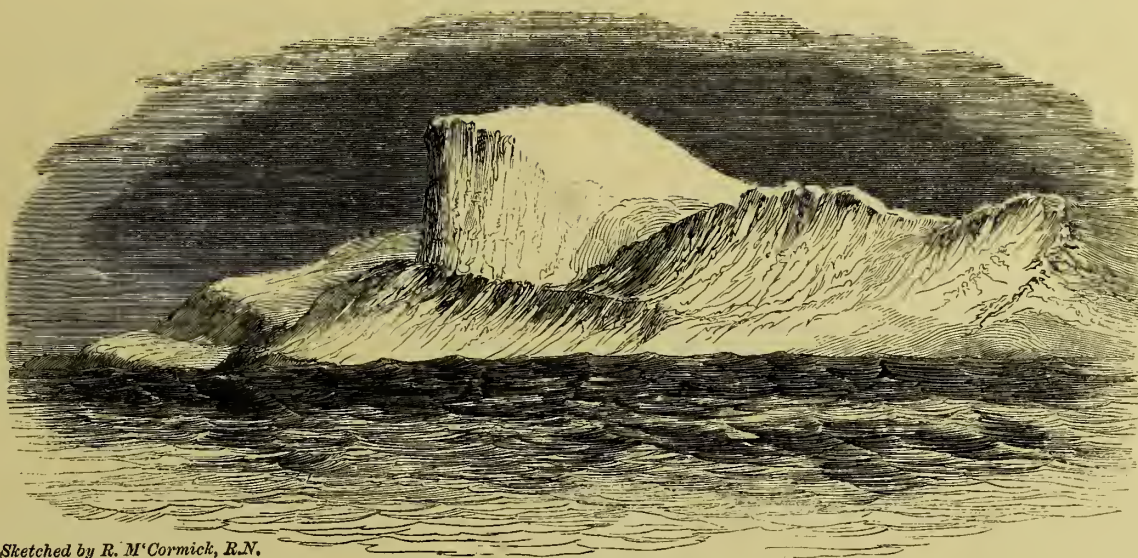
A sudden change in the weather having taken place yesterday, accompanied by a heavy fall of snow, covering all the hills with one uniform mantle of white, too plainly heralding the setting in of winter, rendered my visit a very brief one; and shoving off again, we rounded Beechey Island in a snowstorm, and were compelled to lower the sail and pull through some loose stream ice (coming out of the Wellington Channel,) to Cape Spencer, where we had our dinner of cold bacon and biscuit, at 2 P.M.

On doubling Innes Point, we fell in with a large quantity of drift ice, setting with the strong current, which runs here from the N.W., rapidly down channel, and apparently extending across to the opposite shore of Cornwallis Land, leaving a narrow passage of open water along the North Devon side, which I availed myself of, pushing onwards between the ice and the land. The shingle beach, between Innes and Lovell Points, is margined by a low glacial formation, giving the latter point a white berg-like termination.

At 6 P.M. I landed to examine a remarkable conical heap of shingle, not unlike a cairn, as it peered above the snow. It seemed to have been thrown up at the outlet of a water-course to the sea, the bed of which was now dry; but the cleft in the ridge of rocks through which it passed was roofed over with ice and snow, forming a cavern beneath.

On entering, a beautiful grotto disclosed itself, the floor glittering with countless globular masses of frozen drops of water, and the roof with pendant icicles clear as rock crystal. The interior of the cave, which extended to a greater distance than I had leisure to follow it up, was so encrusted over with these aqueous stalactites and stalagmites, that the whole surface sparkled through the faint gleam of light admitted, as brilliantly as if studded with huge diamonds.

The weather suddenly cleared up fine, but the wind shifting round to N.N.W. dead against us, hemmed us in between the ice and the land, within a bight, leaving open water in mid-channel, from which we were cut off by a belt of heavy floe-pieces, margined by much sludge, and about half a mile in breadth. Our further progress being thus arrested, we landed at 7 P.M. to take our tea, in the hope that by the time that we had finished this refreshing repast, a passage might have opened out for us. At 8 P.M., however, the ice was jamming us into the curve in the coast closer than ever. I therefore determined on making an attempt to force the boat through it, by poling her along with the oars and boarding pikes. In this way we succeeded in getting about half way through, when the swell increased so much as we neared the



Sketched by R. M'Cormick, R.N.

Cape Spencer, bearing W.N.W.,* distant Two Miles.

* All the bearings are magnetic.



Sketched by R. McCormick, R.N.

Launching of the Boat over the Drift Ice from Lovell Point Encampment.

margin, and the heavy pressure to which the boat was subjected between the larger floe-pieces became so great, that we had to haul her up on the ice, after taking everything out of her, to preserve her from being stove in. We then endeavoured to drag her over the larger pieces, with the intention of embarking the provisions and other things, as soon as she was launched into the loose sludge outside. Whilst thus laboriously employed, the making of the flood tide augmented the swell and commotion amongst the floe-pieces so much, pressing them together with such violence, that one of the largest and thickest pieces on which we had deposited our provisions suddenly parted in the centre, threatening destruction to everything upon it.*

In this critical position I was reluctantly compelled to relinquish the attempt for the present, and after landing everything in safety by means of the sledge, we dragged the boat over the floe-pieces and landed her upon the beach. It was midnight before we pitched the tent for the night on a ridge of shingle, after four hours of unceasing, most harassing, and dangerous work, which fairly put to the test the capabilities of every one of my small party, and fully satisfied me that I could not have selected a finer boat's crew for a perilous service, had I had the whole Arctic squadron to have picked them from. After supper, having set a watch for the night as a precaution against a surprise from the bears, whose tracks were rather numerous upon the snow on the beach, the buffalo robes were spread, and all turned into their felt-bags to enjoy that sound and refreshing sleep, which seldom fails to attend on the wearied and toilworn, however hard may be the couch or inclement the clime.

* It was in a scene like this, and not far from the same spot, that the unfortunate Bellôt was drifted away on a floe piece of ice, and lost his life, for want of a boat.

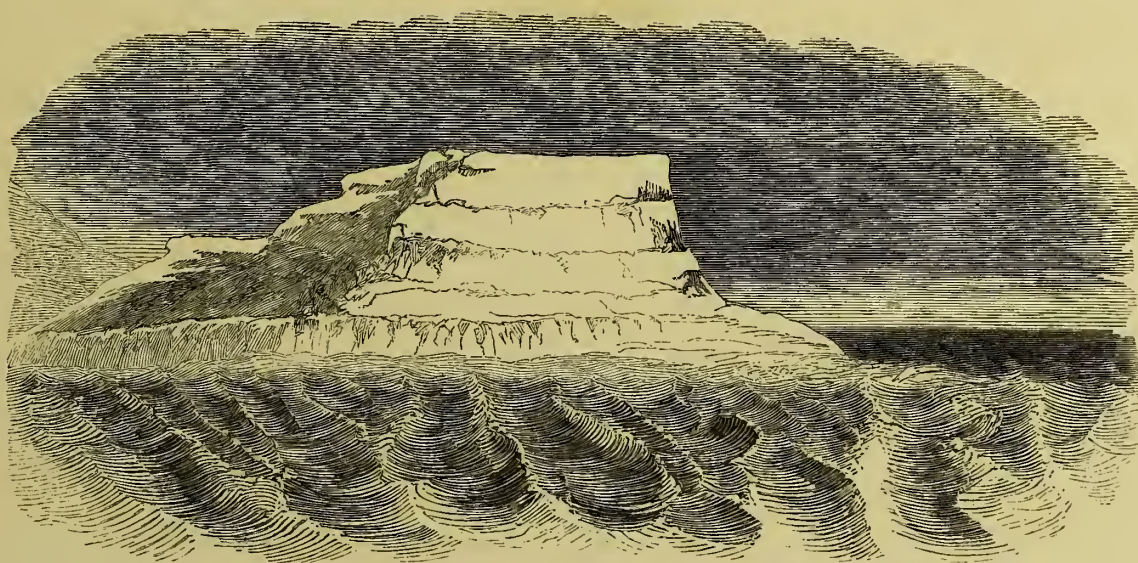
Friday, 20th August.

THE spot on which we encamped last night is a little to the northward of Lovell Point, all around a snowy waste, save and except the narrow shingle ridge on which the tent stood, and that was bare. The northern sky looked black and threatening, not that peculiar dark horizon indicating the presence of open water, and hence technically called a water-sky, but the lurid appearance preceding bad weather; the thermometer during the day rose no higher than 31° Fahrenheit. We saw four large flocks of geese all flying at a considerable height in their usual angular-shaped phalanx, shaping their course for the south, a sure sign of winter's near approach. Saw also many dovebies and kittiwakes, and two seals.

On emerging from our felt-bags this morning at six o'clock, in which, chrysalis-like, we had been incased during the night, and quitting the confines of the tent, we found that but little change had taken place in the scene around us: both ice and weather bore much the same aspect. On the outer edge of the ice a heavy surf was still breaking, and large floe-pieces had been stranded on the beach by the heavy pressure in the night. The atmosphere looked gloomy, overcast, and threatening; the thermometer had fallen below 29° , and young ice formed to the thickness of an inch. After our breakfast of cold bacon and biscuit, with chocolate, I took a rough sketch of the encampment, and walked for about a mile along the beach to the northward, in search of a more promising part in the belt of ice for embarkation, but found none, even so practicable for the purpose as the place of our encampment.

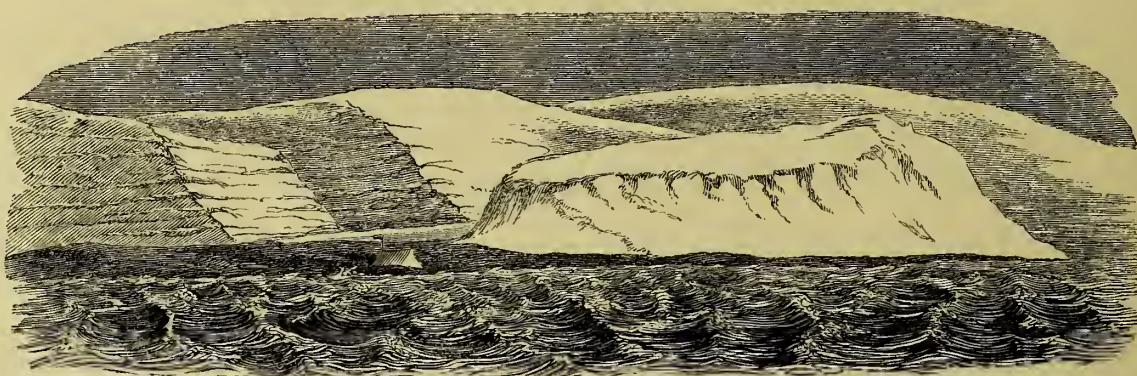
On my return, therefore, the boat was once more launched upon the floe-pieces, which, from the wind drawing round more to the westward, had been packed closer together in shore; and at 10 A.M., by dint of great exertion, we at last succeeded in gaining the outer margin; but it was noon before everything was got into the boat, having to make three sledge trips from the shore with the provisions and other things. We now launched her into the sludgy surf, where, from her being so deep in the water, although with only a month's provisions on board, and this she could barely stow, her situation was for a few minutes a very critical one, from the risk of being swamped, till by a few lusty strokes of the oars, we were swept fairly out of this vortex of sludge and water into the open channel, and made sail with a fresh breeze for Cape Bowden, going at the rate of about five knots an hour.

In doubling Cape Bowden we had to make a considerable detour, to avoid a long stream of ice extending from it to the distance of several miles; and in running through the heavy swell and sludge which skirted it, carried away our rudder, through one of the pintles giving way, which, on examination, was found to have been defective, and the rudder altogether badly fitted. In short, the boat was an old one, which had been knocked about in the late expeditions, and not well adapted for such an enterprise as this. This accident, together with a freshening breeze accompanied by thick weather, snow, and sleet, compelled us to lower the sail, at 5 P.M. I now looked out for a spot to beach the boat, under Cape Bowden, a perpendicular cliff, rising to the height of upwards of five hundred feet above the level of the sea; but the extremely narrow strip of shingle beach at its base was so thickly studded with stranded hummocks and berg-pieces of



Sketched by R. M'Cormick, R. N.

Cape Bowden, from the summit of Cape M'Bain, W.N.W.



Sketched by R. McCormick, R.N.

Cape M'Bain, bearing W.S.W.

ice, on which a heavy surf was breaking, as to render it alike impracticable either to haul up the boat or find room to pitch the tent afterwards.

On the north side of Cape Bowden we opened a pretty little bay, of semicircular form, most symmetrically so, about a mile in breadth at its entrance, and much about the same in depth; bounded on the north by a low, narrow peninsula, suddenly rising into, and terminating in a tabular-topped cape, about two hundred feet in height, separating it from Griffin Bay. We pulled all round the little bay with the intention of encamping there for the night, but found the beach everywhere so hemmed in with a fringe of grounded hummocks of ice lashed by the surf, that not a single opening offered, even for running the boat's bow in between them. A flock of geese, a number of gulls, and several ravens, which we had disturbed in their solitary retreat, took wing on our approach. I gave it the name of Clark Bay; and the headland bounding it to the north, I called Cape M'Bain, after two esteemed friends; the former being one of the few remaining survivors who shared in the glorious battle of Trafalgar, and the latter an old voyager to these regions.

On rounding Cape M'Bain into Griffin Bay, the weather became so thick as nearly to conceal the land, and we had some difficulty in finding a spot where the boat could be beached. After coasting the south side of the bay for nearly a mile within the Cape, we at last succeeded in hauling her up into a little nook between the grounded hummocks with which the whole line of coast was thickly strewed. At 6.15 P.M. we pitched the tent for the night, between two small shingle ridges, lighted a fire, and had tea, with some cold bacon and biscuit.

Griffin Bay presented a most wild-looking scene of desolation; the surrounding hills were all covered with snow; huge masses of old ice which had been stranded by some enormous pressure, lay thickly strewed along its shores, in places piled up in chaotic confusion; and the upper part of the bay was full of loose ice, the winter's floe having very recently broken up. The streams of ice which we met with on our way up channel doubtless came out of this and the adjacent bays.

When about turning into my felt-bag for the night, I found it saturated with water, and preferred taking my rest on the buffalo robe, without any other covering than what the tent afforded, having a black tarpaulin bag containing my change of clothes (all thoroughly drenched by the seas the boat shipped over her bows) for my pillow.

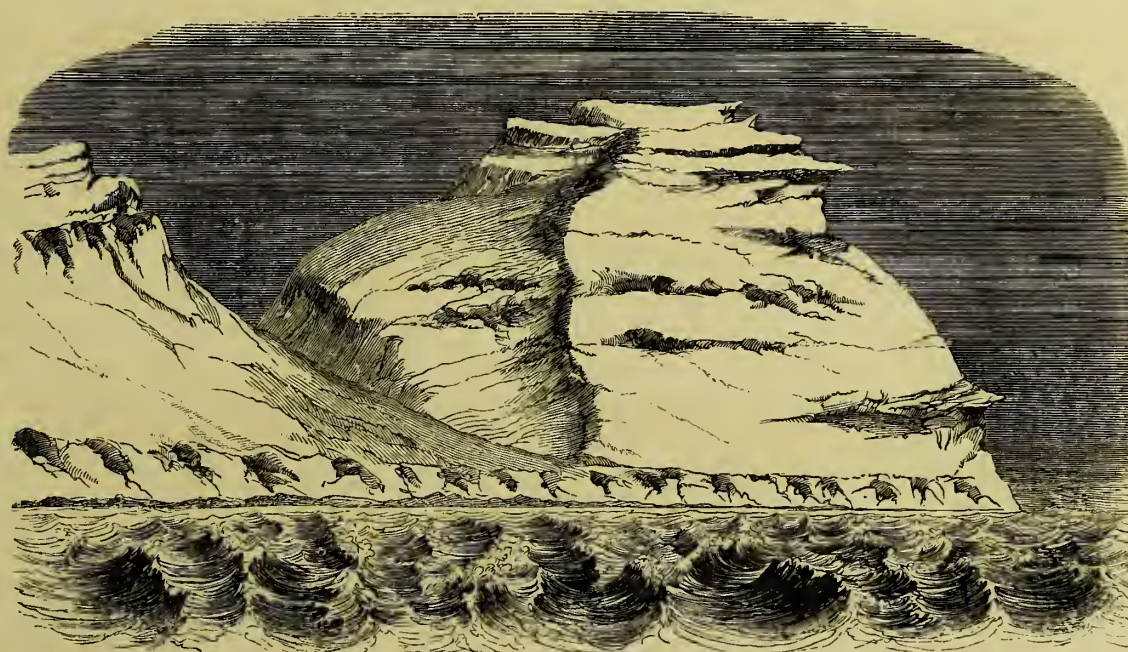
Saturday, 21st August.

ROSE at 5 A.M., breakfasted, and started at six o'clock for the summit of Cape M'Bain, on which I found a cairn, containing a small gutta percha case, enclosing a circular printed in red ink on yellow tinted paper, dated Tuesday, May 13th 1851, and stating that a searching party from the "Lady Franklin" and "Sophia" brigs had left, for emergencies, on the north point of the bay, a cache of sixty pounds of bread and forty pounds of pemmican. From the spot on which the cairn stands, I took sketches of Capes Bowden and Grinnell, and descended on the south side into Clark Bay, and whilst examining its shores, I saw an Arctic gull and three fine large white hares (*Lepus glacialis*), which, however, were far too shy and wary to allow me to approach within ball range of them: both barrels of my gun being loaded with ball, I discharged one after them, which sent them running off at a tremendous rate.

Returning to our encampment, we struck the tent, and after re-embarking everything, made sail with a fair wind from the westward at 9.15 A.M., but still the same overcast and gloomy aspect of the sky. After we had proceeded for some distance, I discovered that a fine musk ox (*Ovibos moschatus*) skull and horns, (evidently a bull's from the bases of the horns meeting over the forehead,) found by two of the boat's crew, on one of the ridges above the bay, in a ramble they took last night,—had been left behind on the beach. This was much to be regretted, as the specimen furnished pretty decisive evidence that these animals must once have existed here, and the probability is, that they do so still. It bore evident marks of long exposure to the weather, bleached white, porous, and time-worn.

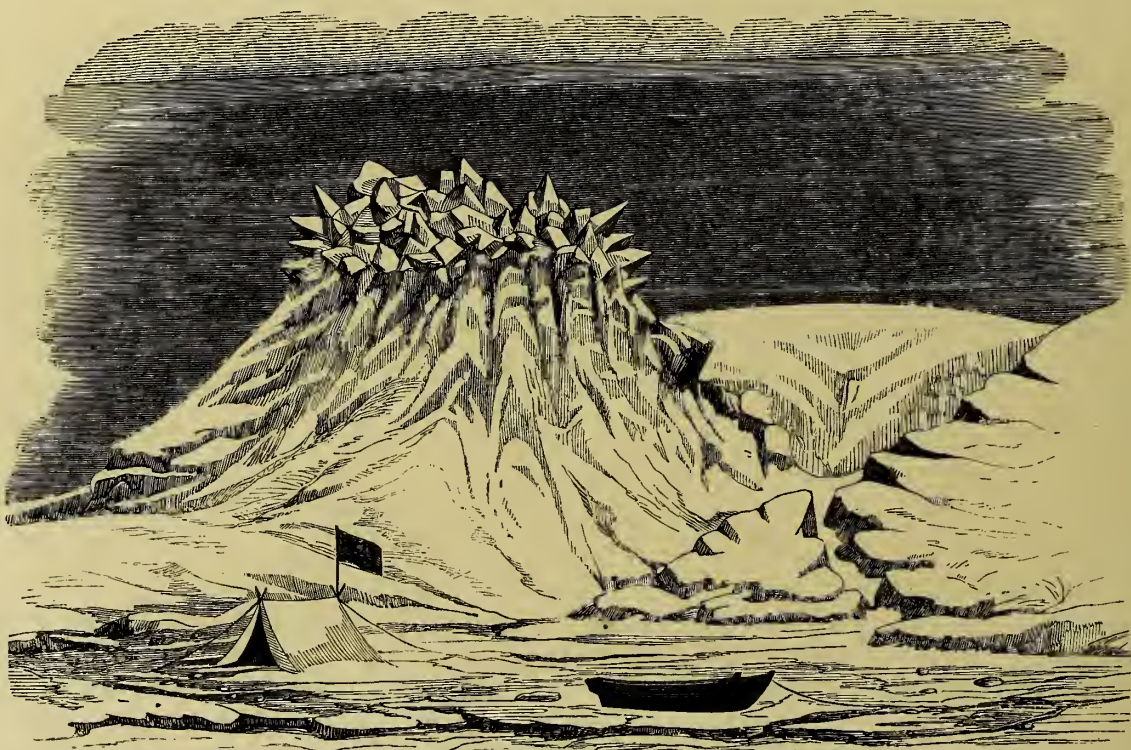
Standing over for Cape Grinnell, we encountered another heavy stream of ice, which crossed our course as it drifted rapidly out of Griffin Bay, cutting us off from the shore, and we had to get out the oars and pull round it. Our rudder, which we had made an attempt at repairing, again gave way. We passed a shoal of white whales (*Beluga borealis*), and saw the cairn on the point where the depôt of provisions was left. After taking a sketch of the latter, I landed about noon upon a narrow shingle beach, on which we lighted a fire and cooked a warm mess, made of preserved mutton, soup and potatoes, for our dinner. On walking up the ridge to the cairn, through a heavy fall of snow, we found the provisions gone; and as there were recent foot-prints up the side of the ridge leading to it, where the melting of the snow had left the soil sufficiently soft and plastic to take impressions, I came to the conclusion that the "Assistance" and "Pioneer" had taken them on their way up channel. Returning to the boat, we shoved off at 3 P.M., the sun glancing forth a momentary ray through the surrounding murky atmosphere, as we receded from the shore. On rounding the cairn point, we opened another small semicircular bay, strikingly resembling Clark Bay both in size and form; and to which I gave the name of M'Clintock, after my friend, the distinguished Polar traveller, now commander of Her Majesty's ship "Intrepid."

The coast, along which we had now to pull against a fresh northerly breeze, presented a very bold and striking aspect. Bluff headlands, rising precipitously from the water's edge to the height of six hundred feet and upwards, and skirted at the base by a narrow belt of shingly beach, profusely studded with stranded hummocks of ice. From the steep fronts of these mag-



Sketched by R. M'Cormick, R.N.

Cape Daniell, bearing N.W.



Sketched by R. M'Cormick, R.N.

Encampment in Emery Bay.

nificent cliffs of the mountain limestone projected three or more horizontal tiers of buttresses in strong relief, the effect of which was much heightened by the tiers being bare of snow, and black—so contrasted with their white sides as to give them the appearance of some frowning and impregnable fortress, or imposing battery presented by the broadside of a stately three-decker. Between two of these remarkable headlands, another very symmetrical bay opened out, bounded on the north by a wild, romantic-looking cape, towering upwards with smooth and swelling sides to near its summit, and then abruptly breaking up into angular-shaped rocky fragments, forming a rugged, picturesque looking crest, seven or eight hundred feet above the level of the sea. To this pretty bay I gave the name of Emery, after an old and much valued friend; and to the south headland Cape Daniell, after another esteemed friend; both of whom have their names already enrolled in the annals of African discovery. I saw the tracks of bears and foxes upon the snow along the beach.

Cornwallis Land, forming the opposite shore of Wellington Channel, piebald with snow, loomed dark and wildly through the mist, at the distance of between twenty and thirty miles, yet I could distinctly make out the point forming its north-eastern extremity. Passed several white whales, a seal or two, and several large flocks of geese, the whole migrating to the south, a few dovebies (*Uria grylle*), fulmar petrel (*Procellaria glacialis*), glaucous and kittiwake gulls.

At 6. p.m., observing a cairn on a low ridge of shingle, I ran the boat in between the grounded hummocks of ice on the point. Landed and found a tin cylinder containing a notice that the "Assistance" and "Pioneer" had passed on Sunday morning last at 10 o'clock, bound to Baillie Hamilton Island—"all well."

From this we had a very prolonged and fatiguing pull along a most dreary line of coast, closely packed with grounded hummocks. The breeze increased to a fresh gale, accompanied by sleet and snow; the thermometer 28°; air cold and pinching, and the whole of the land more deeply covered with snow than any that we had yet passed. The horizon to the north looked black and threatening, and a faint pinkish streak of light seemed to give an additional air of wildness to its aspect. The night, too, was fast closing in, with no prospect before us of the smallest nook where we could haul up the boat in safety till the morning. A long way ahead of us three bold capes appeared in the distance; the nearest, a remarkably black-looking one, prominently jutting out from the snow-clad ridges flanking it on either side. Aground off it was a large mass of ice of fantastic shape, rising from the sea by a narrow neck and then expanding out into the form of an urn, appearing as if filled with white foam rising above the brim in a convex form. A long stream of ice was seen extending out from the Black Cape, which led me to hope that we should find a bay on the other side of it out of which the ice had drifted, and a place of refuge for the night, for my boat's crew were fairly worn out by pulling for so many hours against a head-sea and strong current (running here, at times, five or six knots an hour,) and exposed to such inclement weather.

In passing a low shingle ridge, before we reached the black headland, a cairn upon it caught my eye through the dark gloom in which it was enveloped, and although an ice-girt lee shore upon which a heavy surf was setting, I felt that it was my duty to attempt a landing to examine it. The boat's head was therefore at once directed for the shore, and run in between two heavy grounded masses of ice, leaving just room enough for her bows to enter; the ridge of shingle was too steep to haul her up, or I should gladly have encamped there for the night, unfavourable as was the spot for pitching our tent. We had to walk along the ridge over snow, in some

places very deep, before we reached the cairn, and, to our great disappointment, after pulling it down and carefully examining the ground beneath and around it, found no record whatever. It was a small pile of rocks resembling a surveying mark, but when and by whom erected no clue was left upon which to form a conjecture. We saw here recent tracks of bears and foxes on the snow. Returning to our boat, after some difficulty in embarking in the swell, the crew, to whom I had given a little brandy each, pulled under its temporary influence with renewed vigour for the Black Cape.

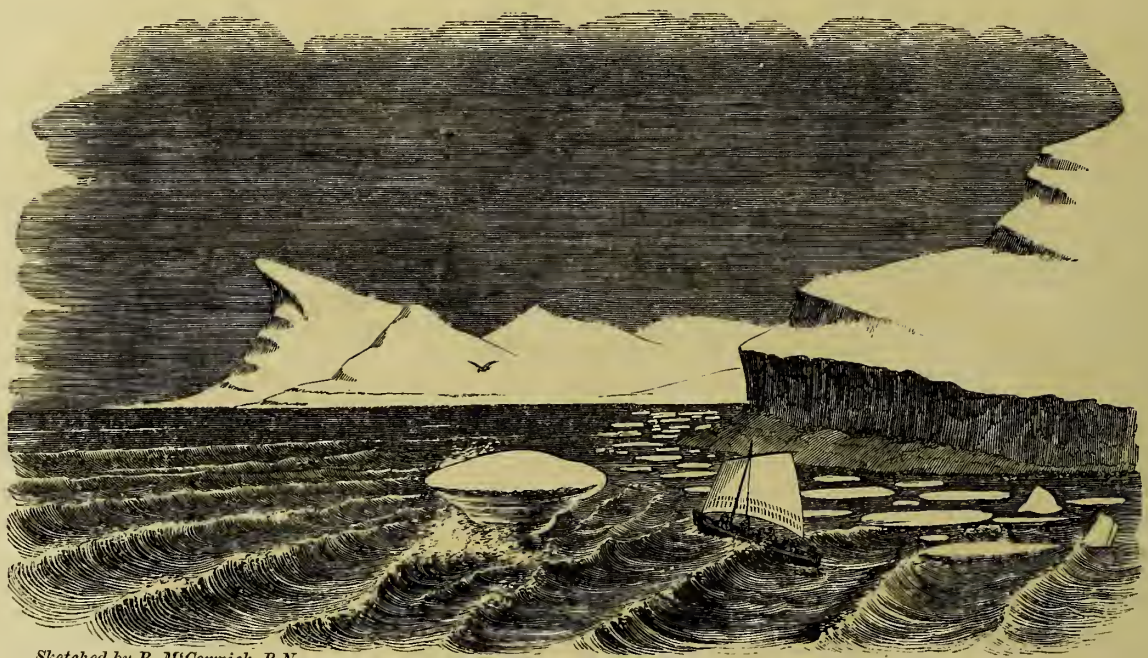
That harbinger of the storm, the stormy petrel or Mother Carey's chicken (*Procellaria pelagica*), the first I have seen during this voyage to the Arctic regions, flew past the boat, and I fired at it but missed it, the boat rolling at the moment too heavily in the swell for taking anything like an aim. We at last rounded the urn of ice and pulled through the stream, passing between and very close to several huge hard-washed blue masses of ice aground, on which a foaming surf was breaking, and the boat pitched and rolled so much in the ground swell as to ship a good deal of water, compelling us to bail her out.

On rounding the black headland we entered, as I had anticipated, a fine bay, between three and four miles deep; but after pulling for some distance along its wild-looking inaccessible southern shore without finding a nook where we could hope to get the boat's head in, being a lee shore, ice-girt, on which a dangerous surf was breaking, we had to pull across to the opposite side, a distance of two miles, the shore of which appeared in the form of low shingle ridges, giving promise of a beach on which we might haul up the boat in safety, as well as a dry ridge, free from snow, for pitching the tent. At first we rowed over a very shallow bottom, upon which the pebbles were distinctly seen, in a heavy ground-swell, but as we neared the north side got into deeper water. It was half an hour past midnight when we at last succeeded in hauling up the boat on the beach between some berg-pieces, which had been forced up by some vast pressure above the ordinary high-water mark.

Whilst some of the crew were employed in getting the things out of the boat, and securing her for the night, and others pitching the tent on the shingle-ridge above the beach, which on landing I had selected for the site, the cook for the day lighted the fire, and prepared supper. I strolled with my gun along the ridge round the north point, where huge berg-pieces were piled up one upon another in chaotic confusion to the height of from twenty to thirty feet by some tremendous pressure, occasioned, doubtless, by high spring-tides and heavy north-westerly gales.

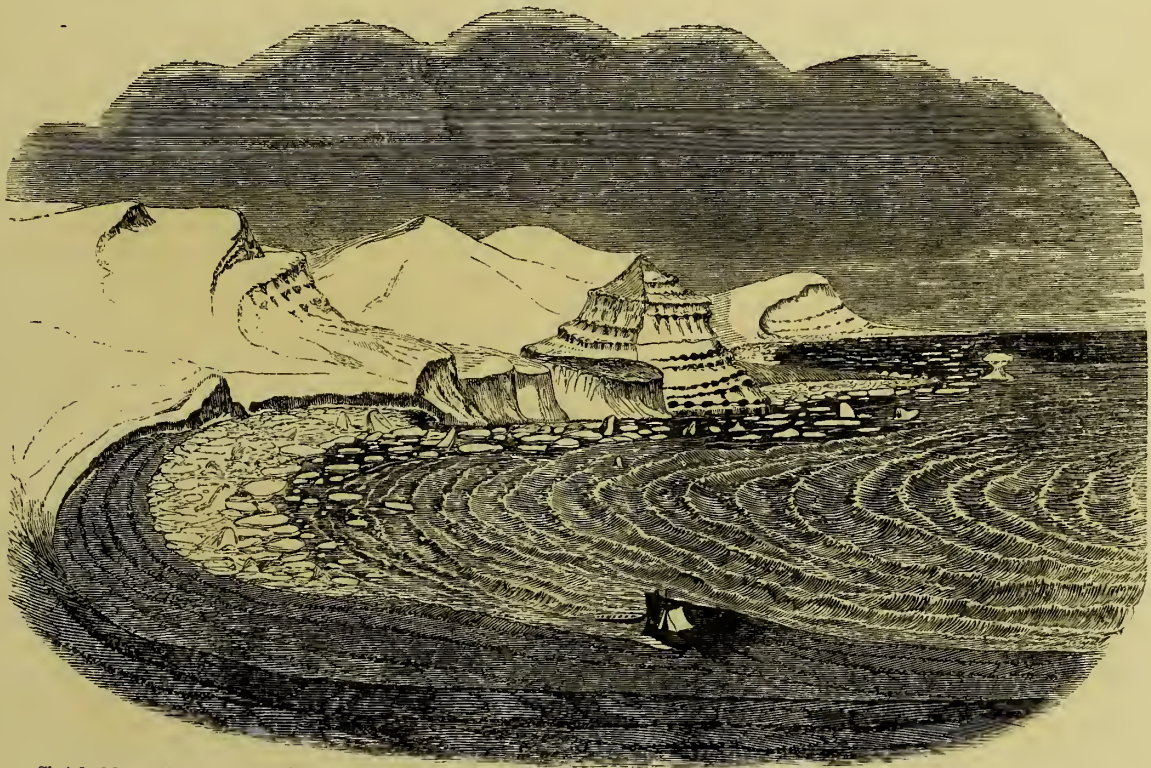
The strong breeze we had been pulling against, had now increased to a hard gale of wind from the same quarter, accompanied by an overwhelming snow drift. Thermometer 28°, and piercingly cold,—altogether a dismal night. So that we had encamped none too soon, for our frail boat could not possibly have lived in the sea that was now running outside. Therefore I called the inlet the Bay of Refuge, the black headland I named Cape King, and to the north point I gave the name of Pim, after two enterprising Polar friends, both well known for their enthusiasm in Arctic discovery, and their plans for the rescue of our missing countryman,—in the search for whom, Lieutenant Pim, like myself, is embarked in the present expedition.

On my return to the place of our encampment, I “spliced the main brace,” that is, served out extra rations, in the present instance, of bacon and Burton ale, to the boat's crew for their supper, after their long day of toil and exposure. It was 2.30 A.M. before we turned into our felt-bags for the night; mine was, however, still wet, and I lay down on the buffalo rug as on the preceding night.



Sketched by R. M'Cormick, R.N.

Pim Point, S.W. Bay of Refuge. Cape King, S.W. by W.



Sketched by R. M'Cormick, R.N.

M'Cormick Bay.

(Named by the Hydrographer of the Admiralty.)



Sketched by R. M'Cormick, R.N.

Rogier Head, South.

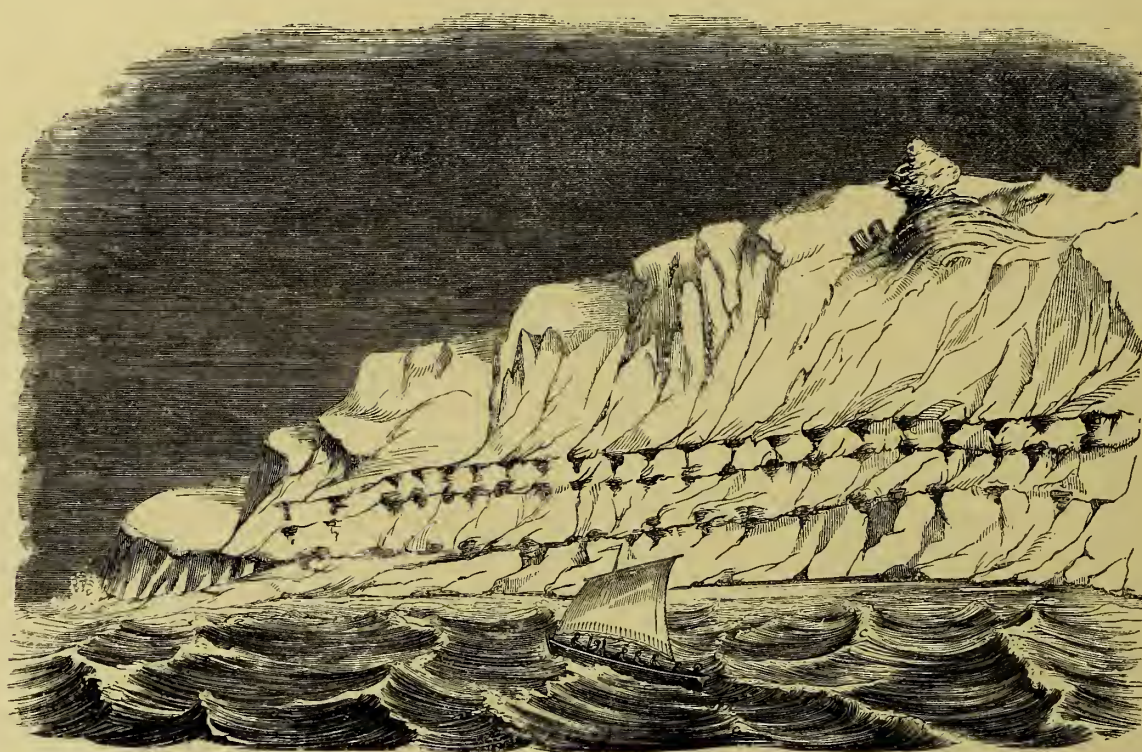
Sunday, 22d August.

HAVING retired to rest late last night, or rather early this morning, we did not rise until 10.30 A.M. It was still blowing a hard north-westerly gale, with snow-drift and overcast thick weather; so bitingly cold was the air within the tent, that sleeping, as I always do, at the weather end, where the wind blows in under the canvas, my hands felt quite benumbed throughout the night, from their having been exposed, in the absence of my felt-bag covering. I shaved for the first time since leaving the ship, and made my toilet under the lee of the boat. After our customary breakfast of chocolate, cold bacon, and biscuit, I took from my pocket a little prayer book, which had been my companion years gone by to both the Poles, North and South, and round the world, from which I read to my boat's crew part of the morning service, finishing with a short extemporary prayer, which suggested itself at the moment, as best fitting the occasion.

At 12.30 I left the tent, accompanied by three of my men, for the summit of Rogier Head,—which I named after an old friend who had been engaged in African discovery,—a bold craggy promontory, above five hundred feet in height, overhanging the sea, and about three miles distant from our encampment. Our course lay over some snow-clad ridges up a gradual ascent. At 1.45 P.M. we reached the summit, from which a wide and wild scene of desolation met the gaze; whichever way the eye was directed a grand and sublime spectacle presented itself, to which the fury of the tempest lent an awful interest.

Beneath the precipitous face of the overhanging crag on which I was seated, the surf was furiously lashing the narrow strip of black-shingle beach at its base, margined by a belt of shallow water, the limits of which were well defined by a turbid greenish appearance, contrasting strongly with the dark, very dark, blue colour of the water beyond. Along the edge of this zone of shoal water, countless white whales were swimming down channel, literally speaking, in a continuous stream. Amongst them, here and there, one of a pie-bald colour; and sometimes the back of a straggler or two appearing in the discoloured water itself; all, doubtless, migrating to less rigorous seas, whilst open water afforded them a passage to the southward. Over head, a solitary kittiwake (*Larus tridactylus*) hovered with uplifted wing, as it breasted the violent gusts of wind that at intervals swept past, driving along dense volumes of mist from the mysterious north, which came rolling over the dark surface of the channel, on the opposite side of which the bleak and barren snow-streaked cliffs of Cornwallis Land bounded the horizon to the westward, terminating in a black point forming its north eastern extremity, about the position of Cape De Haven, half concealed in gloom and mist. To the north westward Baillie Hamilton Island loomed like a dark bank of clouds above the horizon: three or four glistening patches of white light, reflected upon the surface of the dark water through some hidden aperture in the clouds, shone with the brightness of molten silver, amid the surrounding lurid atmosphere; rendering, the whole scene altogether a fit subject for the pencil of a Claude. We commenced our descent of the mountain at 2.30 P.M., and having taken as careful a survey of the vicinity of our encampment as the thick and unfavourable state of the weather would permit of, reached the tent at 3.30 P.M., without finding any cairn or traces of any one having landed here before us. Only the

tracks of a bear and fox on the snow were seen. This morning, on starting, a small piece of drift wood was picked up above the present high-water mark ; and last night another musk ox skull was found by some of the boat's crew. It was the skull of a cow, the horns being small, and a space between their bases on the forehead, and not in such a good state of preservation as the last. This gives me sanguine hopes that I may yet fall in with the living animal itself, before the winter drives us back to the ship. Discouraging as there is no denying our present prospects certainly are, we must at all hazards solve the Baring Bay problem first. On reaching the tent we found dinner all ready, and a warm mess of preserved mutton very acceptable. A dismal night—thermometer 25°.



Sketched by R. McCormick, R.N.

Franklin Beacon, bearing S.E. by E.

Monday, 23d August.

It blew in heavy squalls all last night. About 9 o'clock this morning, however, a lull taking place, I resolved to make an attempt to reach Baring Bay so soon as the sea should sufficiently go down for launching the boat. After breakfast we erected a cairn on the low shingle ridge where the tent stood, and deposited beneath it a tin cylinder containing a record of our visit. The upper extremity of the bay was still covered with the smooth winter's floe, which had not yet broken up.

MEMO.—A boat expedition from Her Majesty's ship "North Star," at Erebus and Terror Bay, Beechey Island, in search of Sir John Franklin, encamped here at 12.30 A.M. on Sunday, August 22d, during a gale of wind, and left for Baring Bay on the following morning at 10.30.

No traces found.

R. M'CORMICK, Officer Commanding Party.

August 23rd 1852.

At 10.45 A.M., as we were about to start, I shot a sandpiper (*Tringa maritima*) on the beach. On rounding the outer point we found a considerable swell outside, with a strong breeze to pull against; passing Rogier Head, the headland we ascended yesterday, and another adjoining promontory, we had to contend with a short head sea, in a deeply laden boat, with a damaged rudder almost useless, compelling us at times to use a steer-oar in addition to keep her head to the sea, along as dreary and desolate a looking coast as I ever recollect having seen in these regions. The land appeared like a vast wreath of deep snow banked up against the horizon, its continuity broken only by deep gulches in one or two places, with not the smallest bight or indentation along its ice-encumbered shores, on which a heavy surf was breaking, where a boat could find shelter during a gale of wind.

After a most laborious pull of four hours we reached the steep and almost perpendicular ridge of Cape Osborn, a bold headland of rounded form, white with snow, excepting where a dark blotch appeared just below its summit, formed by the bare rock of the projecting buttresses. This cape may be considered the northernmost boundary of Wellington Strait, which here expands out into the broader Queen's Channel. At 1.45 P.M. we passed a very remarkable isolated mass of rock, rising abruptly from the steep face of this ridge about one third from the summit.

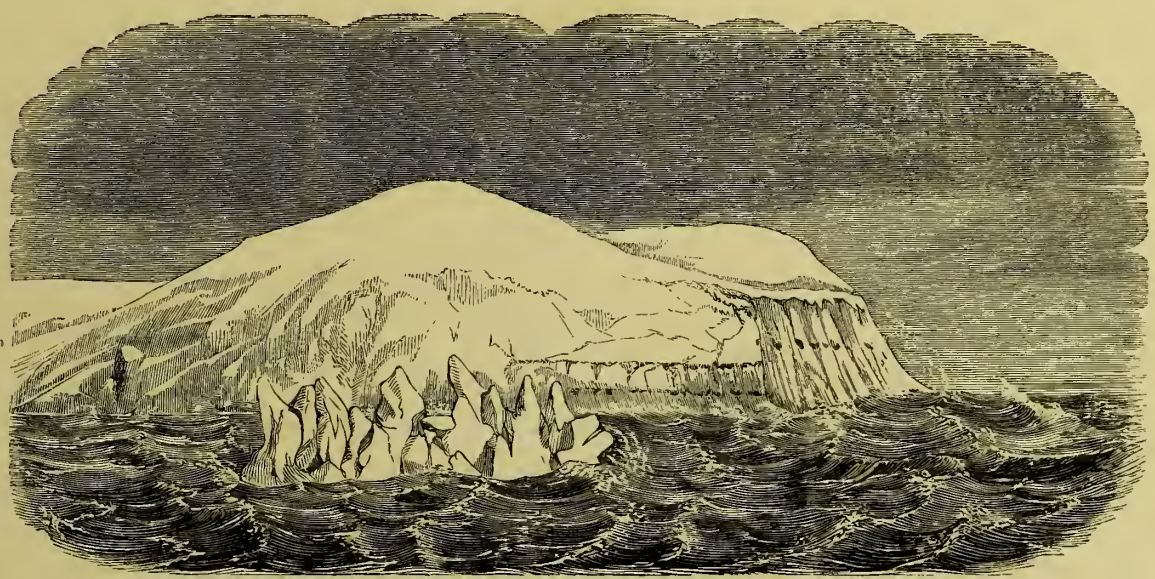
It bore a striking resemblance to the bust of a human figure of burly form, and habited in a cloak and cap; the horizontal layers of limestone rock, of which it is composed, being so arranged as to give the cloak a caped appearance; a slab of the limestone in front of the figure, fancy might liken to a book. This singular specimen of sculpture from the hands of nature, worked out of the rock by the united chisels of time and weather removing the softer portions and leaving the harder standing forth in strong relief,—I transferred a fac-simile of it to my sketchbook under the name of "Franklin's Beacon," whose attention it could not fail to attract, pointing as it does to those unknown and unexplored regions which lie beyond, around the Northern Pole, untrodden by the foot of man since creation's dawn, and in the deep recesses of

which, doubtless, lies hidden his mysterious fate, of which our search, thus far, unhappily has failed to elicit the slightest trace.

At 4 p.m. we doubled Cape Osborn, on the north side of which a huge pile of dirty yellow-looking old berg-pieces of ice lay aground in the turbid greenish shoal water which skirts the coast all the way to Baring Bay, extending out from the hummock-fringed beach to the distance of a mile or two and upwards, and along which a heavy ground swell sets upon the shore in a succession of long rollers, through which it would have been utterly hopeless for any boat to have attempted reaching the land in safety. The coast from Cape Osborn trending round to the N.E. brought the wind more aft, enabling us to make sail, and for some time we made considerable progress, dashing through the heavy cross sea that was running at the rate of five or six knots an hour. Having the breeze with us now, the only chance left us was to run the gauntlet for Baring Bay, in the hope of finding there some haven of shelter after rounding Point Eden, which still appeared at a fearful distance ahead of us; and the long line of foaming crests sweeping over the broad expanse of troubled waters which lie between, threatening to engulf our small frail bark ere we reached it. When we had got about midway between Cape Osborn and this point our situation became a truly perilous one; the boat was taking in water faster than we could bale it out, and she was settling down so much as not to leave a streak free; labouring and rising heavily and sluggishly to each successive sea, so that all expected every moment that she would fill and go down the first sea that struck her, from which only the most careful and watchful attention to the helm preserved her. Fortunately for us, at this critical moment, two small bergs aground providentially appeared on the port-bow, and I immediately ran for them, in the hope of finding the water smooth enough under their lee to enable us, by lowering the sail and lying on our oars, to thoroughly bale out all the water from the boat, which was now nearly full; in this we happily succeeded whilst lying only a few feet from the bergs in comparatively quiet water, protected by their blue hard washed sides from the seas which broke over them to windward, rebounding upwards in foaming columns of surf and spray, which dashed high above their summits from forty to fifty feet in height, presenting a wild scene, at once grand, sublime, and awful.

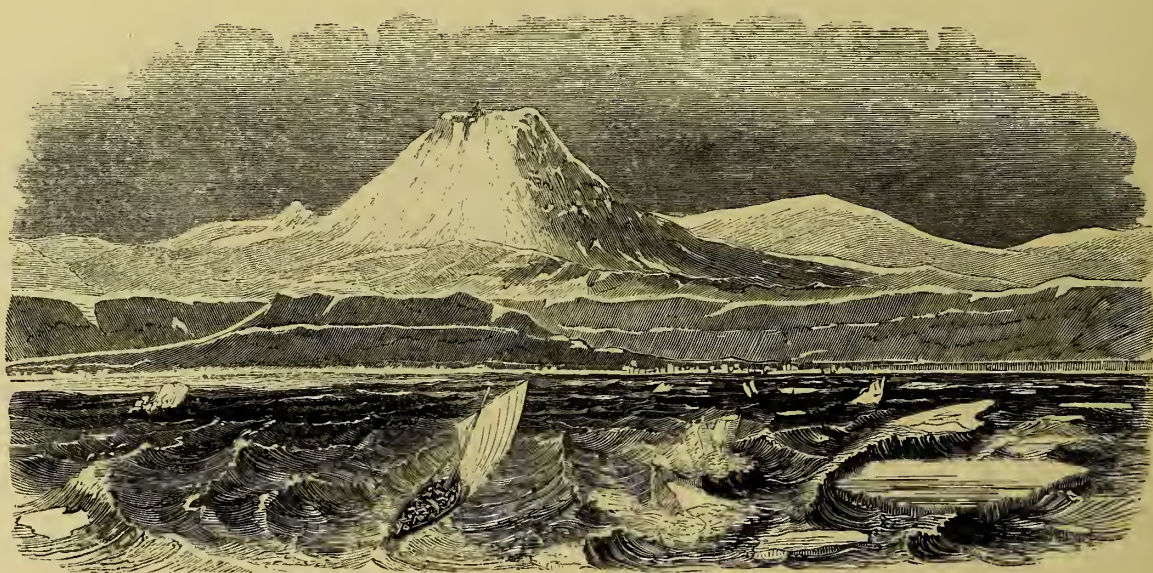
On again making sail our small over-laden skiff, no longer water-logged, bounded onwards over every sea more freely and buoyantly than before; but as we opened Baring Bay, the great body of water which was setting into it from the broad expanse of the Queen's Channel, with the wind and current both from the N.W., caused such heavy rolling seas to tumble in upon the shore, that our crippled rudder was entirely swept away, and we had great difficulty in steering with an oar a boat so deep in such a sea; and had to get one out on each quarter to keep her head to the sea and prevent her broaching to, when nothing could have saved her from foundering instant.

The shores all round this bay presented a perfectly flat surface, level with the floe,—which still, though broken up, filled the upper part of it,—and extending to a considerable distance inland, bounded by a slightly undulating ridge of hills in the horizon, averaging, perhaps, a hundred and fifty feet in height. But one point in these inhospitable shores seemed to offer the faintest hope of a place of shelter. This was a black mount on the south side, of somewhat conical form, having a truncated summit, with shingle ridges in front; and from its marked and conspicuous appearance amid the wide surrounding waste of snow, had particularly attracted my attention from our first opening the bay, as it appeared to me the only spot accessible for ice.



Sketched by R. M'Cormick, R.N.

Cape Osborn, bearing N.



Sketched by R. M'Cormick, R.N.

Mount Providence, Baring Bay. Bearing West.

It was flanked on the west by an inlet, still covered by the winter's floe. On this spot I had from the first centred all my hopes of finding a harbour of refuge. Putting the boat, therefore, right before the wind, I ran for it through a turbulent ground swell, over a long extent of several miles of shoal water of a dirty green colour, showing the fragments of rock and pebbles at the bottom on nearing the shore, when two points for beaching the boat offered; one on the port bow, forming a curious natural basin of quadrangular shape, enclosed on all sides by a narrow ledge of black rocks and shingle, excepting in front, where an opening was left just large enough to admit the boat. Into this, being the nearest, my boat's crew were very anxious to take her, thoroughly worn out as they were by a day of unceasing toil and danger, amid which their cool and manly conduct was beyond all praise. And on losing the rudder and tiller, with which I always myself steered the boat, the ice quarter-master especially proved himself an expert hand at the steer oar at a moment when we were obliged to have one out on each quarter to keep the boat's head to the heavy cross sea that was running, to prevent her from broaching to. I objected, however, to the little land-locked harbour for the boat, on the ground of the chance of being entrapped within it by a change of wind bringing the ice down upon it, and thus preventing us from so readily getting out again; and also from the low, boggy ground, exposed on all sides to the weather, being unfavourable for pitching the tent. I, therefore, stood on for the Black Mount, ahead, and was fortunate enough to find at its base a sloping beach for hauling up the boat between some grounded hummocks of ice, backed by a shingle ridge, dry and free from snow, on which we pitched the tent at 8 P.M., sheltered by another ridge still higher, above which rose the Black Mount. I ascended this eminence, whilst the boat's crew were lighting the fire and getting supper ready. From its summit I saw the ice closely packed all round the bay by the wind now blowing up it, and that this was the only spot where a boat could possibly have found a place of shelter along the whole line of coast, from the bay we left this morning to as far as the eye could reach beyond us to the northward, rendering the navigation of the Wellington Channel extremely dangerous for boats at a late and boisterous season of the year. I saw a flock of geese on the passage here, and another arose from a lake on our arrival. A small fragment of drift wood was picked up on the hill. After spreading all our wet clothes on the shingle to dry, everything in the boat having been drenched with sea water; we had tea and preserved beef for supper, and turned in at midnight, truly thankful to God for our providential escape. Therm. 27°.

Tuesday, 24th August.

BREAKFASTED at 8.30 A.M. As it was still blowing a north-westerly gale, preventing our attempting anything further with the boat, I started at 11.30 A.M., accompanied by one of the boat's crew, on an excursion along shore, with the view of ascertaining the state of the ice, and selecting the best route for sledging round the top of the bay should a continuance of the present boisterous weather render boating operations wholly impracticable.

On passing a small lake about a quarter of a mile from the encampment, we saw two eider ducks (*Anas mollissima*) with eight young ones swimming on it. I shot the whole of the broods and one of the old ducks, the other made its escape. Our course at first lay over flat, swampy, boggy ground covered with snow, through which a few straggling tufts of moss, lichens, saxifrages, poppies, and a small species of juncus made their appearance at intervals; the whole intersected by very low narrow ridges of shingle, and a chain of small lakes. The winter's floe had all the appearance of having been recently broken up by the late gales setting a heavy swell into the bay, which had ground it into fragments and hummocks mixed with sludge. A thick fog coming on, accompanied by snow drift sweeping over the bay from the northward, and concealing the outline of its shores, I struck across the low land for the ridge of hills which bounds it inland, passing several isolated masses of rock which, as they appeared through the snow at a distance, so much resembled piles of stones artificially heaped up, that dwelling, as our thoughts constantly did, on cairns and memorials, we were frequently—until the eye became familiar with these deceptions—induced to diverge from our course to examine them. On ascending the ridge we followed it back to the head of the inlet (south of our encampment), which is nearly two miles deep, and narrow at its entrance, being not more than about a quarter of a mile in breadth, but expanding out to double that width. We walked round several lakes on the ridge of hills, and heard the monotonous mournful cry of the red-throated divers (*Colymbus septentrionalis*) in the vicinity, but the fog had become so thick as to conceal them from view. On descending from the ridge down a terminal black cliff inland of the tent, we had to make head against the gale, which drove the cutting snow-drift in our faces, with the thermometer at 29°. We reached the encampment at 5 P.M., having only had a shot at a tern, and seen the track of a fox. The ice quarter-master and another of the boat's crew returned soon after us from a ramble round the other side of the inlet, having found the skeleton of a bear.

Wednesday, 25th August.

ROSE at 6 A.M.; no improvement in the weather; a quantity of sludge ice driven in shore, which was fast beginning to be cemented together by the formation of young ice, forming an impassable belt for our boat, in front of the encampment. Still too thick and boisterous for boating or sledging. After breakfast I visited the small lake again, and shot three ducks out of a flock of eight young pintails (*Anas caudacuta*). After my return to the tent with them, one of the boat's crew killed the remaining five. We had some of them for dinner, and found them excellent eating. Saw two or three sandpipers, and wounded an Arctic gull (*Lestris parasiticus*), but notwithstanding that the thumb, or tip of the wing, was broken, it succeeded in getting away.

I walked afterwards to the top of the west inlet, accompanied by two of my party, in search of the remains of the skeleton of the bear, they having, on first finding it, brought back with them the skull and pelvis. After a long search we at last hit upon the spot, where a rib was projecting from the snow, beneath which we found most of the vertebræ, deeply imbedded in the richest bed of moss we had yet seen, the result, doubtless, of the manure arising from the decomposition of the animal's carcass; although from the bleached appearance and honey-combed state of the bones, a long series of winter snows would seem to have mantled over them since Bruin dragged his huge unwieldy frame a few yards above the head of the inlet to breathe his last on terra firma, whether in sickness or old age, to become food for the foxes, who had rendered the skeleton incomplete by walking off with most of the ribs and long bones to feast off at their leisure. All that remained I collected, and we returned to the tent through a heavy hail-storm and densely overcast sky, with thick mist, and the thermometer at 25°. Saw some red-throated divers on one of the largest lakes, two tern, and the track of a fox. In the afternoon, the wind shifting round to the westward, and the weather somewhat moderating, though still very squally, I set about making preparations for our sledging journey, the wind now setting directly up the bay, packing the ice so close as to render any attempt with the boat utterly hopeless. Having stowed the sledge with four days' provisions, we dug a trench and made a cache of the remainder of our provisions, filling it up with shingle as a protection against the bears during our absence. The boat was hauled up on the second ridge on which the tent stood, and turned bottom up, with the gear and spare clothes stowed underneath, as a precaution against high tides, which might probably rise higher than usual under the influence of heavy westerly gales.

Thursday, 26th August.

I WAS stirring at 3 A.M. Morning gloomy and overcast, with snow. Wind round to the eastward and moderated. Thermometer 24°. Walked down to the lakes where I shot the ducks; it had frozen over during the night; took a sketch of the encampment from it. Three or four snow buntings (*Emberiza nivalis*) were flitting about on the ridge above the tent, saluting us with their lively cheerful note. Yesterday a red-throated diver was shot on one of the lakes by one of our party. At 5 A.M., I roused out the boat's crew, and we had our chocolate, biscuit, and bacon breakfast.

The progressive fall in the temperature, with the rapid formation of young ice, together with the boisterous north-westerly gales, which had packed the broken up winter's floe upon the shore in front of our tent, forming a belt of hummocks and sludge half a mile in breadth, and daily increasing in extent, cutting us off from the open water, and requiring only a few calm days to cement it altogether, and render the present position of the boat inextricable, were unmistakable signs that the season for boating operations was past; and so soon as a southerly wind from off the land should drive the ice out, no time was to be lost in getting her into the open channel. All, therefore, that now remained to be done was to complete the exploration of this bay by an overland journey.



Sketched by R. M. Cornish, Jr., N.

Encampment, Mount Providence, Baring Bay.



Sketched by R. M'Cormick, R.N.

Owen Point, distant Five Miles, bearing E.S.E.

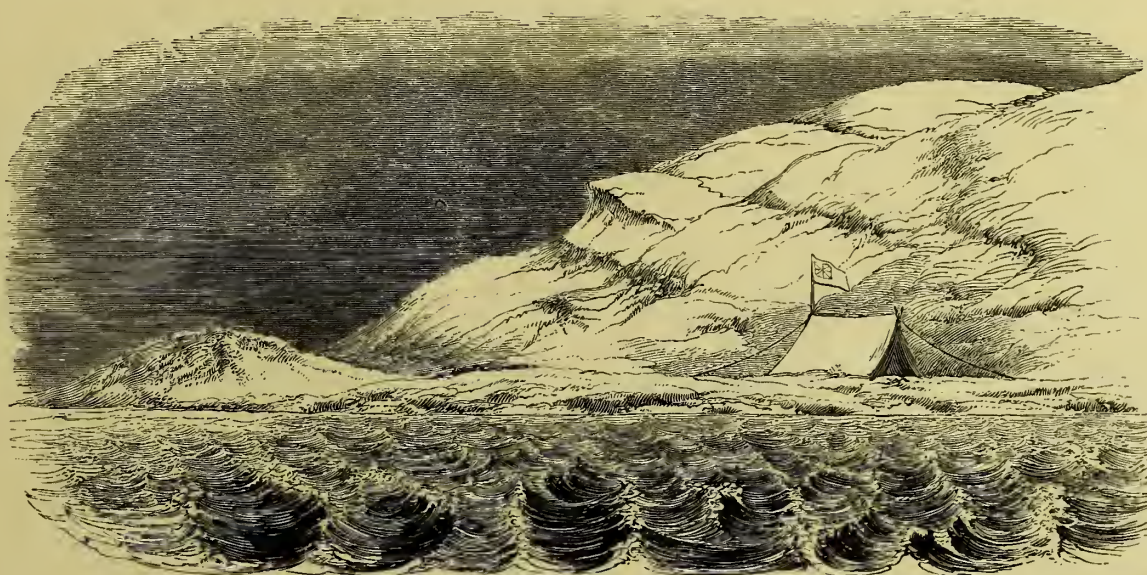
SLEDGE EXCURSION ROUND BARING BAY.

HAVING struck the tent, and stowed it on the sledge, with our felt bags, buffalo robes, four days' provisions, and an "Etna" with spirits of wine for fuel, we started at 8 A.M.; reached the first low rocky point in the curve of the bay, two miles distant, at 9 A.M. Our course lay over the low snow-clad ridges of shingle. From this our encampment hill and boat bore N. (magnetic), but here the variation is so great, as almost to reverse the points of the compass. At 9.30 A.M. we struck off more inland, in the direction of the ridge of hills, to avoid a curve of the bay, crossing over a level tract of marshy bog, covered with snow; on which one of the party picked up a small spider. At 10.15 A.M. crossed a rivulet over a pebbly bed, from which some animal was seen on one of the shingle ridges; but at too great a distance to make out whether it was a bear or reindeer, as it disappeared behind the ridge, before I could get my telescope to bear upon it. Crossed another running stream, rapidly flowing over its pebbly channel, (towards the bay,) across which the sledge was carried. I made a considerable detour here in pursuit of the stranger, without seeing anything more of him, and overtook the sledge upon a broad, smooth, snow-clad plain, the monotonous whiteness of which was only broken by the narrow bare ridges and spits of shingle, which intersected its surface like shaded lines, scarcely rising above it. At 11 A.M., my party being somewhat fatigued with this, to them, novel work, (and dragging a sledge over the inequalities of land, covered with snow though it be, is a far more laborious task than over floe ice,) they had a spell of ten minutes to rest, and take their allowance of rum, mixed with the pure water from an adjacent lake. Saw two sandpipers here, and the track of a reindeer (*Cervus tarandus*), probably that of the animal we lately had a glance of. At 11.30 A.M. reached the head of the curve of the bay we had been steering for; it contained a large patch of loose ice, a low point jutting out from it to the S.E. Point Eden bore N. from this. Passed two small lakes, and heard the cry of the red-throated diver. About noon the breeze died away to nearly a calm, and the men were so heated by their exertions that they took a spell for a few minutes. I saw the land on the opposite side of the Queen's Channel, bearing E.S.E. At 1 P.M. a portion of the spine of some animal was picked up; saw two more sandpipers, and passed another lake. The breeze springing up again, in less than a hour, had freshened to a gale, accompanied by a sharp snow-drift, which swept like volumes of smoke over the wide waste around us to the sea, which was scattered over with streams of hummocky ice. We rested for an hour to dine, on the side of a low shingle ridge, having the bay in front, a lake on either side, and another in the rear, from which we drank delicious water, with our cold bacon and biscuit meal. Started again at 3 P.M.; I shot a tern (*Sterna arctica*) near a small gap or pass, in an embankment here, skirting the bay. At 4.15 P.M. Point Eden bore N.N.W., and a peak of the land on the opposite side of Wellington Channel S.E.

At 5.30 P.M. filled our kettle with water from a neighbouring lake, and having boiled it over the spirit lamp of the "Etna," made tea under the lee of the sledge, in the midst of this wilderness of snow. Cape Osborn with Eden Point bore N.N.W. At 6.30 P.M. started again, and at 7 P.M. when some distance ahead of the sledge, pioneering the way, as was my custom, I came suddenly upon the track of the musk ox, close to one of those numerous running streams, by which the chain of lakelets studding these marshy flats, empty themselves into the bay. The animal appears to have attempted crossing over the frozen surface of the stream, but finding that the ice, which was broken by his two fore feet, would not bear his weight, retreated, crossing his own track in the direction of the hills, bounding the horizon to the southward. From the appearance of the foot-prints (which measured five inches, both in length and in breadth) it must have passed very recently, as there was a driving snow-drift at the time, which would soon have effaced the impressions. These foot prints, when taken in connexion with the two skulls recently found, afford, I think, indisputable evidence that the musk ox is an inhabitant of North Devon, at least, during the summer months; and is, probably, now migrating to the southward for the winter. But their course thitherward, and how they get across Barrow Strait, is not so easily explained; they must, at all events, wait till the Strait is frozen over.

The black point, with its rounded snowy top, in which the ridge of hills environing the bay, terminates to the northward, and which we have had in sight so many hours, as the goal to be reached before we pitched the tent for the night, has for several miles appeared at the same distance, or, as the sledge's crew would have it, receding, as mile after mile, with weary and jaded steps, they toiled along, dragging after them the cumbrous sledge, and still the dark point appeared no nearer. Fairly exhausted, they were compelled to take more frequent spells to rest for a few minutes. The night, however, looked so threatening, the northern sky intensely black and lowering,—premonitory signs of the wind going back to its old stormy quarter,—that I was very anxious to secure the shelter of the point ahead for pitching the tent under, as in the exposed, wide, and bleak waste around us, the canvass and poles supporting it would scarcely have withstood the violence of the strong gusts of wind.

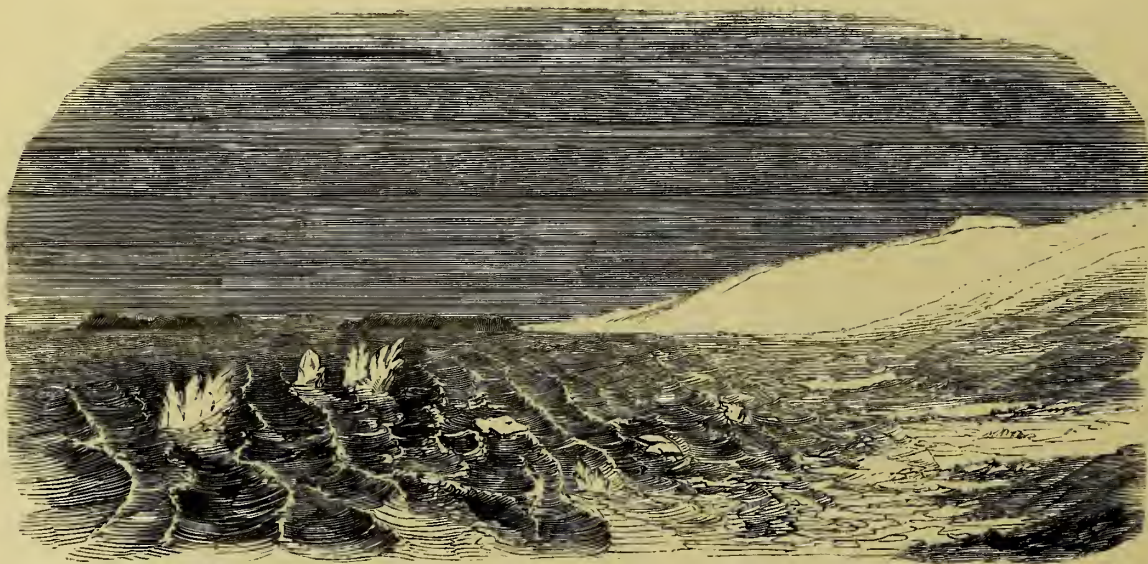
The dark sky was preceded by a very remarkably-tinted horizon in the north, in which streaks of a fine olive green, alternating with bands of an amber colour, and a rich chestnut brown zone, intersected horizontally; the side of the hills about Prince Alfred Bay, crested by a dark neutral tint, vanishing into a leek green. When, within about a mile of the point, to encourage my sledge-crew, and convince them that we were, in reality, now drawing near it, I walked on ahead at a quickened pace and ascended to the summit; and, on descending again to the extreme rugged point, I found them pitching the tent on the shingle-ridge beneath. It was exactly midnight, and thick weather with fine snow. A fire was soon lighted, tea prepared, and bacon and biscuit served out for supper. It was nearly two o'clock in the morning before we turned in, all thoroughly knocked up with the day's exertions.



Sketched by R. M'Cormick, R.N.

Owen Point Encampment, North Point of Baring Bay, bearing E.S.E.

[To face page 20.]



Sketched by R. M'Cormick, R.N.

Westernmost Bluffs of Alfred Bay, bearing E. by S., and Peak E.S.E., as seen from the
summit of Owen Point.

Friday, 27th August.

MORNING overcast; I left the tent at 8 A.M., and whilst breakfast was preparing, ascended the rugged point above our encampment to get a view of our position. At first scrambling over a confused pile of rocky fragments, swelling out above into a broad, smooth, and round-backed hill about three hundred feet in height, commanding a view of the shores of the curve of the coast to the northward of it, laid down in the chart as Prince Alfred Bay; an isolated peak, apparently some little distance inland, just showing itself over the highest range of hills on the north side; this ridge terminating in two black table-topped bluff headlands, running far out to the westward, but the horizon was too hazy for making out distant objects sufficiently clear for getting the different bearings correctly, which, as this spot promised to be the extreme limit of our journey, I was the more anxious to obtain before I commenced my return, more especially as the sun had been hid from our view by fogs, mists, and constantly overcast skies, accompanying the tempestuous weather which has attended us in all our movements since we left the ship; so that no opportunity has offered for getting observations for the latitude and longitude, and consequently my little pocket sextant has remained idle in its case.

In the hope that the weather might clear up about noon, I returned to the tent to breakfast, having seen only about half a dozen snow-buntings flitting about the hill-top. My party were glad to take a siesta in the tent to-day, so knocked up were they after their laborious and toilsome forced march of yesterday, dragging a heavily laden sledge over a distance of about thirty miles, having actually travelled this within the space of sixteen hours, at the average rate of rather more than two miles in an hour, resting for dinner and tea an hour at each meal; the longest sledging journey by far, I believe, that has yet been accomplished in one day without the aid of dogs.

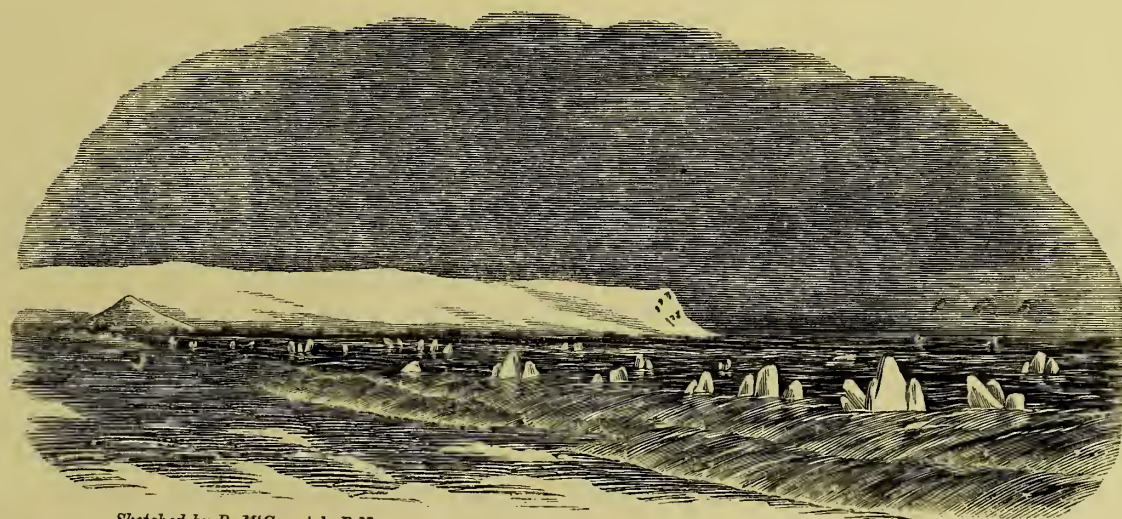
At 1.30 P.M., during a temporary clearing away of the mist, I again ascended the hill above our tent, bounding the low shores of Baring Bay on the north, which I have named Owen Point, in honour of my friend Professor Owen, the distinguished naturalist and Cuvier of our own country, who has evinced a lively interest in the Franklin search and Polar discovery.

Baring Bay, indeed, scarcely deserves the name of a bay; it is little more than a broad sweep in of the coast, and is so shoal on entering it from the southward, that I could see the pebbles at the bottom for several miles off shore; and had good reason to remember the heavy ground swell that rolled over it in surges threatening destruction to the boat every minute, in the gale which drove us before it, to seek the only place of shelter which the whole length and breadth of its shores afforded under the Black Mount.

A black table-topped bluff, bearing E. by S. by compass, forms the western-most extremity of Alfred Bay, on the north side; and a little to the eastward of this, peering just above the high ridge of land, is a peak bearing E.S.E., and being the only apparent peak, would therefore seem to be Mount Franklin, as there is no hill whatever representing it in the position in which it is laid down in the chart inland of Baring Bay. A line of hummocks of ice as if aground, appears in Baring Bay, about two leagues from shore, which may possibly cover a shoal or very low islet. Distant land in the Queen's Channel, apparently Baillie Hamilton Island, &c., bore from

N. by E. to N.E. by E. Cape Osborn bore N.N.W., and the Black Mount above our boat N.W. by N. Whilst taking a sketch of the bays and distant points, the ice quatermaster and some of the boat's crew meantime erected a cairn on the north side of the hill, the others being employed cooking dinner, &c., preparatory to our departure. We finished the cairn at 3.30. P.M., and placed beneath it a tin cylinder, containing a record of our proceedings thus far. On descending the hill we discovered an ancient Esquimaux encampment on its acclivity, consisting of a pile of fissile rocks of semicircular form in front of a natural wall of the stratified rock which jutted out from the side of the hill. We dug beneath it, but found nothing. The rock, a dark brown coloured limestone, highly crystalline, and the surface embossed with the elegant scarlet lichen (*Lecanora elegans*). On our return we had our usual meal of cold bacon and biscuit, with some tea.

At 5 P.M. we struck the tent to commence our return to the boat, the state of the weather unfortunately precluding any astronomical observations being taken for fixing the positions of the land, which have evidently been laid down much in error in the chart. Passing one of the largest lakes I had several shots at a pair of red-throated divers; they had a young one on the lake, which I shot, and started again at 6.20. P.M. We encamped for the night in the midst of the unsheltered waste of snow, nearly half-way back to our boat at 10.30. P.M.



Sketched by R. M'Cormick, R.N.

Mount Providence, with Eden Point and Cape Osborn, N.N.W., as seen from the summit of Owen Point.

Saturday, 28th August.

AT 8 A.M., breakfasted, struck the tent, and started again at 9.30 A.M. This was about the most uncomfortable night we had yet passed, blowing a hard gale of wind, accompanied by a fall of snow, and clouds of drift, and so cold that we could not get warm all night. The wind finding its way under the tent, shaking it so violently, that we expected every moment the poles would give way, and the canvass come down upon us for a coverlet. The thermometer stood at 29°. The watch during the night heard a distant sound, like the bellowing of cattle. Probably the musk ox, whose foot prints I fell in with yesterday, but concealed from view by the ridge of hills inland of us; for sounds may be heard at a great distance, in the highly rarified state of the air, in the still solitudes of these regions. This snowy desert was here and there dotted over with boulders of rock, richly ornamented with the beautiful and bright scarlet lichen, and intersected by numerous rivulets and lakelets, some of the largest of which were now half frozen over; and the ice on the less rapid fresh water courses permitted the sledge being quickly drawn over by the whole party without breaking. At 11 A.M. we rounded a deep curvature in the shores of the bay, the wind edging round to its old quarter in the N.W., snowing with a strong drift. Saw three or four tern, whose vociferous clamour over our heads proclaimed their anxiety for the safety of their young, evidently not far off. At intervals we heard the wild deep toned and mournful cry of the red-throated diver rising from some adjacent lake, music to the ears of us lone wanderers, in the dearth of life and sound around us. We saw one large flock of ducks only, going south. At 11.30 A.M. crossed an elbow of the low shores, forming a considerable convexity in the bay, from which a deep curve ran up beyond it; bounded on the west by a low black point, covered with broken up fragments of limestone, faced with the scarlet lichen, and abundantly fossiliferous, more especially in corallines, of which I collected some specimens. Here we became enveloped in a thick fog, which, with snow, continued till we reached our old encampment. At 2 P.M. crossed a patch of loose dark sand, and the sledge party rested for a few minutes near a rapid stream, after crossing which the sledge soon came upon its outward track of yesterday. Saw three or four sandpipers, and wounded an Arctic gull; which, falling somewhere in a dark shingle watercourse, about a quarter of a mile from where I shot it, I lost, after making a considerable detour from the sledge's course in search of it, for I have not yet been able to obtain a specimen of this solitary bird, mostly met with singly or in pairs, and of which we have seen only three or four individuals throughout our journey, all very shy and wary. On coming up with the sledge, we were drawing near the Black Mount, and I proceeded on ahead of my party to see if all was right. Reached the boat and caché at 4 P.M. in the midst of a snow storm, with the wind at N.W. Found everything as we left them, with the exception of the gratifying sight of open water in the cove; all the ice having been driven out during our absence, by the southerly winds, which blew for a few hours, leaving only a narrow belt of loose sludge near the beach, and no impediment in the way of getting to sea in the boat. It was just low water, and the large urn-shaped masses of ice were left high and dry in hollows in the bed of shingle which they had made for themselves in theebb and flow of the tides, and to the repeated action of which they owe their hourglass form. On the arrival of the sledge, we pitched the tent on the old spot. A large flock of ducks alighted in the bay this evening.

Sunday, 29th August.

WE did not rise until 8 A.M. This is the finest morning that we have experienced since leaving the ship; and all our clothing and bedding being so saturated with moisture as to prevent any of us from sleeping last night, I took advantage of the favourable change in the weather to have everything spread outside the tent to dry. Being Sunday, I determined to make it a day of rest to recruit the exhausted energies of my men before we commenced our homeward voyage. All still feeling more or less the effects of the fatigue attending their unremitting exertions for the last two days; one evincing a slight disposition to snow blindness, and another some dental irritation.

After they had all had the great comfort of an ablution and shave, I read part of the morning service to them in the tent. Our dinner, as yesterday, consisted of a warm mess of preserved mutton, soup, and potatoes, with Burton ale. Wind round to the westward, breaking up the winter's floe in the inlet west of the encampment, and which was rapidly drifting out past us. The rise and fall of tide here is considerable, some six feet, probably. The wind this evening shifted to the N.W., with a fall of snow in large flakes. Night overcast and misty, with a black looking horizon to the northward. We turned in at 9 P.M.

Monday, 30th August.

I WAS up this morning and outside the tent as early as four o'clock to look around, and, having well weighed both our present position and future prospects, to determine on the best course to be adopted; when, taking into consideration the advanced period of the season and unpromising appearance of the weather, that nothing further could be accomplished in the search northward and eastward of this bay, I very reluctantly decided on returning to the ship, and we commenced stowing the boat and making preparations for our return.

At 9.30 A.M., we crected a cairn on the summit of the Black Mount, which I called Mount Providence, in commemoration of our providential deliverance from as perilous a position as a boat could possibly have escaped from,—placing beneath the cairn a tin cylinder, enclosing a record of our proceedings, of which the following is a copy:—

MEMORANDUM.—A boat expedition from Her Majesty's Ship "North Star," at Erebus and Terror Bay, Beechy Island, in search of Sir John Franklin, arrived here on Monday August 23d, at midnight, during a gale of wind and heavy sea, which carried away the rudder of the boat and nearly swamped her.

On Thursday last, sledged on the snow over the low lands round the head of the bay, without finding any opening to the eastward or traces of the missing expedition; returning to the boat on Saturday afternoon. Weather during the preceding week has been most unfavourable, blowing, snowing, and foggy, with the thermometer constantly below the freezing point. The lakes frozen over, and every appearance of winter rapidly setting in.

Launched the boat this morning on the making of the tide, to return down Wellington Strait and examine the bays along its eastern shores. A memorandum of our sledge journey has been deposited under a cairn erected on the summit of the northern point of the bay.

Monday, August 30th, 1852.

R. M'CORMICK,
Officer Commanding Party.

To the inlet running up on the west side of Mount Providence, from S.S.W. to N.N.E., I gave the name of Dragleybeck, in commemoration of the birthplace of Sir John Barrow, Bart., and in compliment to his son, John Barrow, Esq., of the Admiralty, F.R.S., who, following up his father's career, has earned for himself a distinguished position in the history of Arctic discovery by his noble and unceasing efforts in furthering the search for the brave but ill-fated Franklin and the rest of our long-lost countrymen.

The chain of lakelets on the moorland I named, after two near relatives, the Louisa and Marianne Lakes.

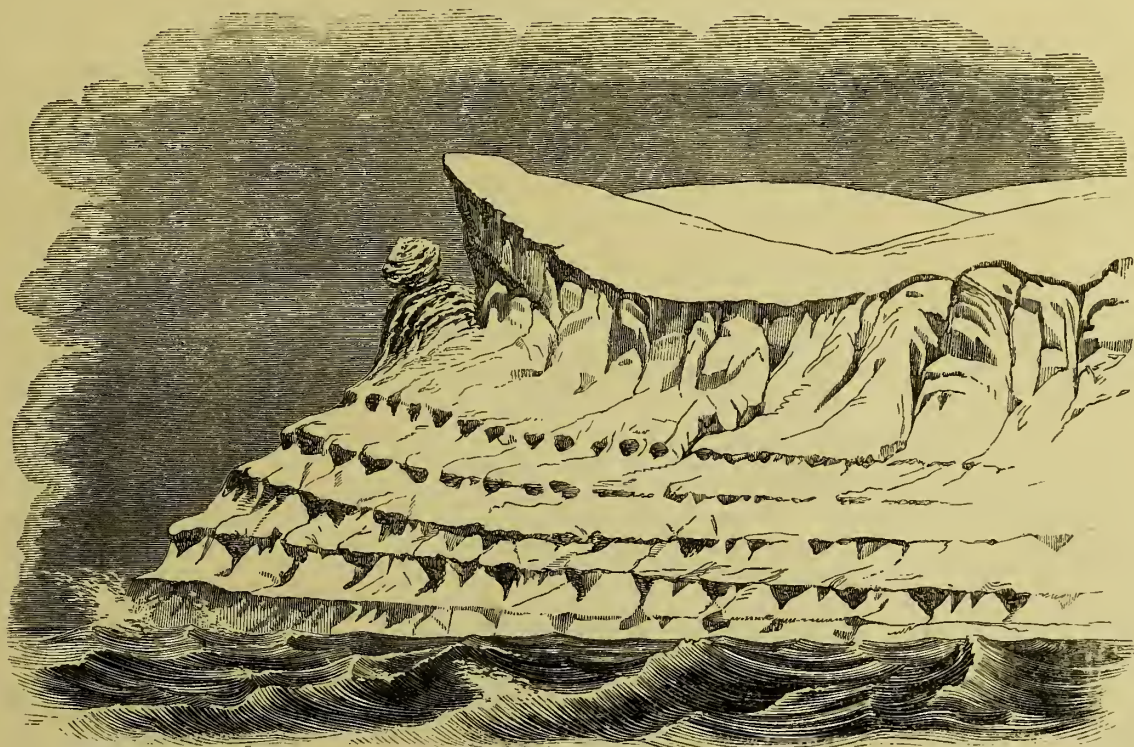
Descending to the ridge, which is about fifty feet above the beach, and from thence to the lower one on which the tent stands, we struck it and erected another cairn on the spot where it stood. The rocks here are sparingly fossiliferous. It was a very low tide this morning, being out a hundred feet from the last high-water mark.

After a luncheon of cold bacon and ale, to fortify the boat's crew for their long pull they had before them to the next bay, against a head wind and pinching cold air, we about noon launched

the boat between the heavy hummocks of ice aground, five or six feet in height when high and dry. Had snow, fog, and mist, with a short head-sea to buffet with; the drops of water froze on the blades of the oars as they rose from the sea after each stroke, and accumulating till the lower edges became fringed with pendant icicles; the water shipped over the bows soon froze at the bottom of the boat, so that had there been much sea on we should soon have had a very dangerous kind of immoveable glacier-like ballast.

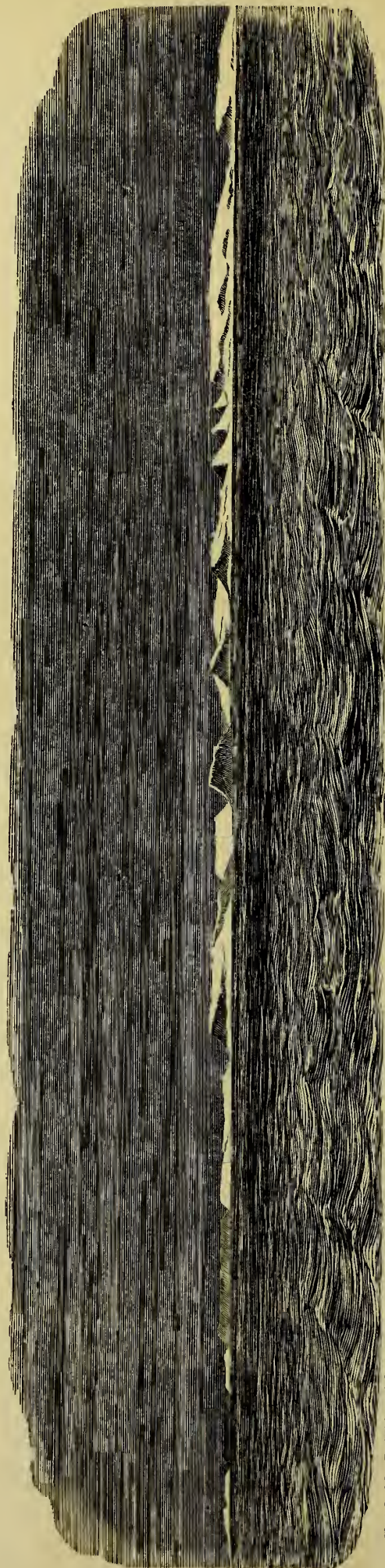
We saw a seal or two, a flock of ducks, a few dovebies, fulmar petrel, and the arctic gull. At 6.45 P.M., on rounding Eden Point, the trending of the coast in a S.W. direction enabled us to make sail. We carried away a temporary rudder which we had constructed just before we started out of the head of a cask from the wreck of the "M'Lellan," American whaler, lost by the unfortunate but enterprising seaman, Captain Quayle.

At 7.30 P.M. we doubled Cape Osborn, and, a quarter of an hour afterwards, Franklin's Beacon standing forth through the mist in strong relief from the side of the ridge. At 9.30 P.M. reached our old place of encampment in Refuge Bay. Found much more snow here than when we left it last, being very deep in places. Pitched the tent close to our cairn, snowing all the time, and pinching work to the mens' fingers. Thermometer 27°. The state of the tide prevented us from hauling up the boat on the shingle ridge, which for greater security I always get done if possible; we were therefore obliged to let her ride in the cove, with an anchor out on shore.



Sketched by R. M'Cormick, R.N.

Franklin's Beacon, S.S.E.



Sketched by R. M. Cormick, A.N.

Coast of Cornwallis Land, on the opposite side of Wellington Channel, as seen from the Bay of Refuge.

Tuesday, 31st August.

THE morning's dawn brought with it the same kind of weather as yesterday—snow, mist, and fog. Rose at 6.30 A.M. The first fox (*Canis lagopus*) was seen by the watch last night near the boat; represented to have been of a brown and white colour. I found my aneroid barometer this morning quite useless, having sustained some injury from being thrown on the beach in the clothes-bag in clearing the boat, and into which it had been accidentally put. This was a serious loss to me, as I had intended measuring all the heights with it in returning down channel.

From the Point I took sketches of the two Capes south of the bay, together with the opposite coast of Cornwallis Land.

At 2.45 P.M. having embarked everything, we pulled all round the bay, closely examining its shores, and landing at all remarkable points. At about half a mile from the top got soundings in thirteen fathoms, and within less than a cable's length of the shore the soundings gave four fathoms very regularly. The winter's floe had not yet broken up in a creek at its south-western extremity, and young ice had formed here to the thickness of four inches. This is the only safe and well-sheltered bay along the whole of this coast for anchoring a ship.

Saw several seals, gulls, and dovebies, and shot one of the latter. Landed at a little cove for a few minutes to examine the rocks, and sounded again, still getting four fathoms. At 5.30 P.M. landed near a black cliff in a thick snow storm, and examined a remarkable-looking ravine running up from it.

6.30 P.M.—Had to pull through a quantity of sludge ice round the outer point in clearing the bay. Took a sketch of the headlands and entrance to the bay from the southward. Shot at and struck a seal, but he escaped us. Saw four or five ducks.

At 8.30 P.M. doubled the next cape, to which I gave the name of Toms, after my friend the Assistant Surgeon of the "North Star," an enterprising young officer. At 9.30 P.M. passed the Point where the cylinder and memoranda were found coming up channel, which I called Domville Point, after my friend and brother-officer the Surgeon of the "Resolute." About 10.30 P.M. entered Emery Bay, and encamped on a fine hard shingle ridge.

Wednesday, 1st September.

I WAS awoke between 3 and 4 o'clock this morning by the ice quarter-master, who had the watch, running into the tent, and reporting that our boat was swamping in the surf by a sudden squall coming on with the flood tide. On hastening down to the beach I found her broadside on, and half full of water and sand. On getting her round, head to sea and stern in-shore, we succeeded, after some labour and a thorough drenching, in getting everything out of her, and hauling her up above the shingle ridge; capsizing her as soon as she was sufficiently clear of the breakers, to empty out the water and sand. It now blew a hard north-westerly gale; the sky was densely overcast, and the air pinchingly cold: thermometer 29°.

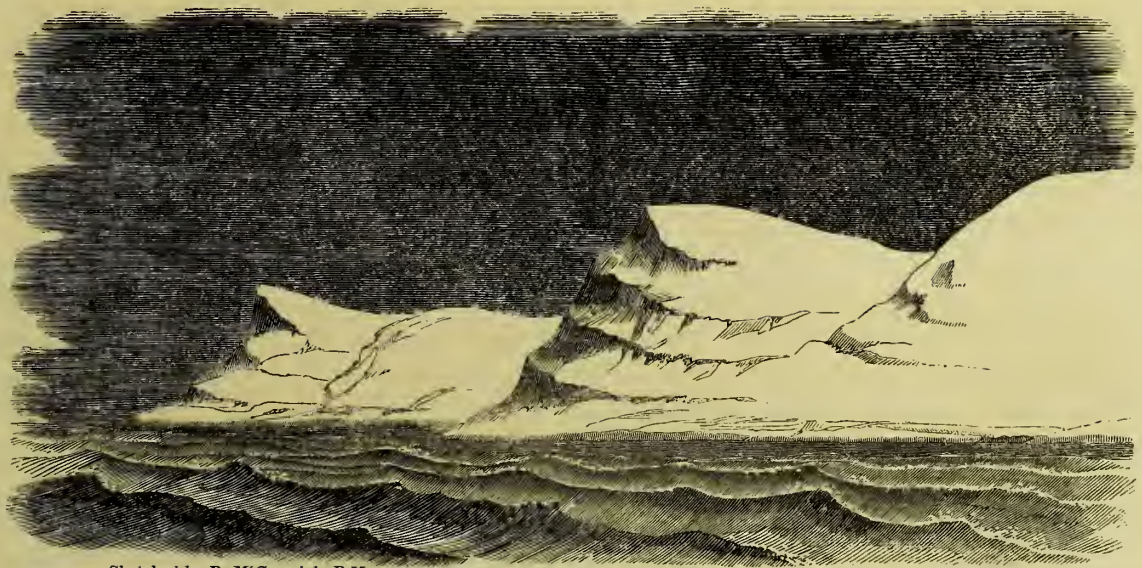
Breakfasted at 8 A.M. The boisterous state of the weather not affording the slightest prospect of our being able to make a move to-day, with such a sea running outside; therefore, after drying the things, and repairing the damages sustained by the morning's disaster—fortunately nothing of a more serious nature to our provisions than the soaking of an ullage of biscuit in salt water—I planned an excursion round the inland ridges of hills; and to spread the search more widely, separated our party into three divisions of two men in each, taking our guns in the hope of meeting with some game, such at least as these desolate shores have to offer. We started at 5 P.M., leaving only the cook for the day in charge of the encampment, and a gun to defend himself from bruin, should it be needed. I directed one division to ascend the ridges south of the bay, another directly inland, whilst myself, accompanied by one of the boat's crew, proceeded up the hill to the north; first, passing through a romantic-looking, deep, and narrow ravine, with steep precipices on either side formed of limestone rock, banded horizontally in places with veins of gypsum three or four inches in thickness. I entered this ravine last night, whilst supper was getting ready, and traced the foot-prints of a fox to his domicile in the rocks; but saw nothing of him this morning. Following a zig-zag course for about a mile; the black crags breaking through the white mantle of snow which now deeply covers the land, gave it a very picturesque appearance, terminating in an open space between the hills. On emerging, we ascended the hill bounding it on the right, and shaped a south-easterly course, so as to fall into the track of the other divisions of our party on the central ridge. On sighting them we descended to the shores of the bay, examining the beach all round to the encampment, without meeting with the slightest traces or indication of any one having preceded us here, and not a living thing to break the death-like stillness and utter desolation of the scene. We reached the tent at 7 P.M., and the other parties returned soon afterwards, with the same results.

When on the highest ridges, I carefully observed the appearances of the land in an easterly direction within the extent of vision for any apparent break of continuity that might afford an indication of water beyond, never losing sight of the possibility of Jones's Sound sweeping round in its course near the heads of some of the deeper inlets of the Wellington Channel, taking a westerly course from Baffin's Bay in the direction of Baring Bay, as Jones's Sound is represented to do in the chart. But neither Baring Bay nor the two other bays that I have since closely examined afford any indication of the vicinity of open water. An intermediate series of ridges of hills, one just rising above the other, and for the most part running parallel with the coast, bound the tops of all the bays; and I have never seen the gulls or other sea-fowl flying inland to the eastward, although I have at all times watched them narrowly in their flight.



Sketched by R. M'Cormick, R.N.

Domville Point, N.



Sketched by R. M'Cormick, R.N.

Cape Toms, bearing S.W.

Thursday, 2d September.

BREAKFASTED at 7 A.M. The violent gusts of wind, accompanied by heavy snow-drift, during the night, nearly blew down our tent, and the air was excessively cold. Anxiously waiting for the gale to abate, to proceed on our voyage. After sketching the encampment and the adjacent hills, I walked up the ravine, and filled a haversack with specimens from the gypsum vein. Dined at 1.30 P.M., and built a cairn near the tent, under which I deposited a tin cylinder, enclosing the usual record of our proceedings. The gale abating during the day, as soon as the sea had sufficiently subsided I took advantage of the temporary lull to start at 4 P.M., notwithstanding a dark threatening horizon, with the hope of reaching our old quarters in Griffin Bay before we should encounter a second edition of the gale, which it was but too evident was brewing up in the north. On starting, saw a solitary snow-bunting on the beach. We sounded in crossing the bay with a line of twenty-three fathoms, and no bottom at this depth. The ridges round the top of the bay have a mean height of about two hundred feet.

I sailed round the next semicircular bay, which I called "Fitton Bay," after an old friend and distinguished geologist, Dr. Fitton (who was the first to direct my attention to the structure of that highly interesting and remarkable island, Kerguelen's Land—Desolation Isle of Captain Cook—in the southern seas). Closely and carefully examined its shores and ridges, and got soundings in from four to five fathoms at a hundred yards from the beach. There is no shoal water in either of these bays, both being deep. The boat got into heavy rollers outside of the headlands; one or two of which struck her, filling us with more water than we needed, having had enough of that element already. A black threatening squall rising to windward, we exerted every effort to reach Griffin Bay before it overtook us. At 5.30 P.M. we rounded Cape Grinnell, in a snow storm, into smooth water. Saw the provision cairn on the point, and two seals swimming. Sailed close in shore round the bay, which is margined by shingly beach with hummocks of ice aground all round (as usual on all these shores), backed by a ridge of hills from 100 to 200 feet in height, receding inland in the form of an amphitheatre.

On first rounding the north point, an arm of the bay runs into the N.E.; here we passed a snug little creek enclosed in the shingle banks, leaving an opening just sufficient for admitting a boat, secure from ice and weather; but having a fair wind, I was anxious to make the most of it, inauspicious as was the aspect of the heavens.

We reached the top of the bay, which is about six miles in depth, at 7 P.M., and found a low shingle and mud flat, backed by boggy ground, and extending inland to the base of the amphitheatre of hills, interspersed near the beach by pools of water, which appeared to be full of small fish, as the gulls were far more numerous here than at any other spot we have yet visited. A large group of kittiwakes and fulmar petrel, with an ivory gull or two amongst them, were evidently making a good harvest, repeatedly rising with a fish about the size of a pilchard in their beaks after each rapid downward plunge in the water. A solitary Arctic gull was actively carrying on at the same time his buccaniering depredations amongst them whenever an opportunity offered for robbing an unlucky gull of its prey, by compelling it to drop the fish with a scream, which, with great tact, was caught by this sea rover before it dropped into the water.

I ran the boat's head in, but the water was so shoal that she grounded at too great a distance from the beach to affect a landing; and just as I was about stepping out at a more favourable spot, a little further on, with the intention of shooting some of the birds and obtaining specimens of the fish they had swallowed, a bear was discovered on the floe which filled up the inlet at the S.W. corner of the bay. Bruin being considered by all hands, and certainly not the least so by myself, higher game than the gulls, the sail was hoisted instanter, and the boat's head in a few minutes was dashing through the swell (which was now setting into the more exposed part of the bay) before the wind in the direction bruin was leisurely pacing along the ice, on the look out for a seal, several of which were swimming about the bay. Before we reached the floe, which was of young ice already six inches in thickness, he had, however, taken alarm, and made off for the land, disappearing behind a point jutting out from the inlet.

Finding that the squall which had been threatening for some time was now coming in good earnest upon us, I brought the boat's head round for the south headland of the bay, the site of our former encampment upon the way up channel, in a sheltered cove a little within the headland; but as we became more and more exposed to the sea setting into the bay, in a boat so deep in the water, and so leaky from one of her planks having been stove in by the ice in the bad weather we had been incessantly exposed to, the water from the leak, together with the occasional shipping of a sea, so gained upon us, notwithstanding that a hand was kept unceasingly baling her out, and having no rudder, we had to bear up for the nearest land to us, distant nearly two miles, although unfortunately a lee shore, on which a heavy surf was breaking. We got soundings in twelve fathoms, and saw a second bear. Selecting the most favourable spot that offered for beaching the boat, in a curve of the coast somewhat protected from the rollers by a low point, we backed her in stern foremost, letting go the anchor over the bows, and running a line out astern to the shore so as to keep her head to the sea till everything was got out of her, and fortunately landed without sustaining any damage from the surf, which was breaking heavily against the boat's quarter, save and except a drenching to ourselves.

Before we had hauled her up between the masses of ice into a place of security for the night on the shingle beach, the thermometer fell as low as 25°. The air was bitingly cold, and snowing all the time.

After pitching the tent on a fine hard shingle ridge, clear of snow, the fire lighted, and supper, with a cup of warm tea, under cover of the canvas, we turned into our felt-bags for the night, and soon forgot our toils in a sound sleep.

Friday, 3d September.

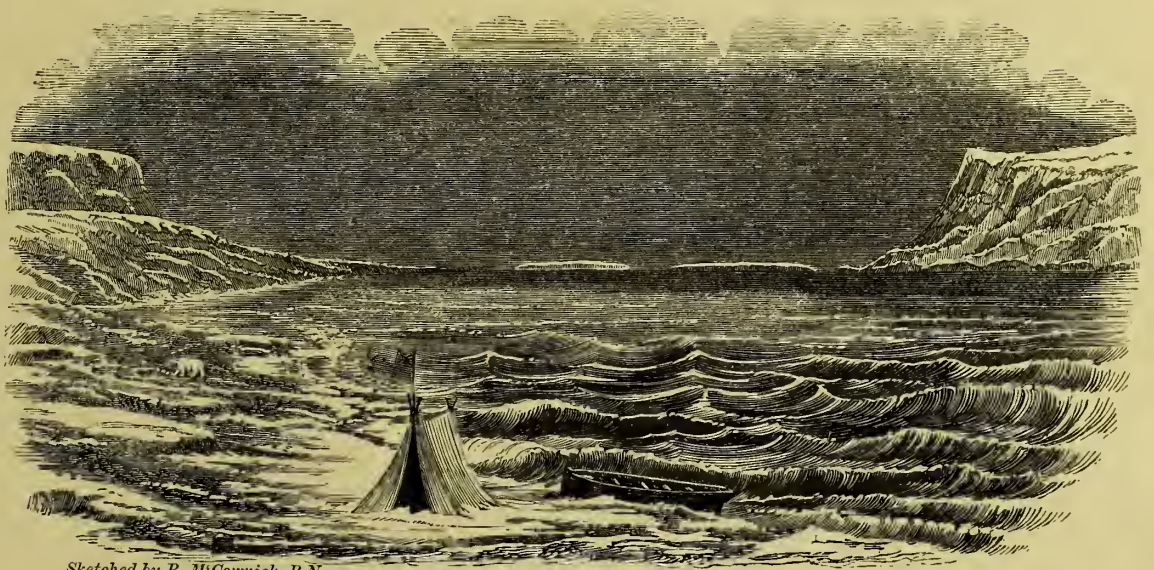
PASSED the most comfortable night that we have yet had, the ground being hard dry shingle on which our buffalo robes were spread. We were confined within the tent all day by stress of weather, which has been most winterly. Blowing, as usual, a hard north-westerly gale, with heavy snow drift, half burying the tent, the sky overcast with a dense mist, and continuous fall of fine snow. Thermometer throughout the day standing as low as 26° , and the air piercingly cold. The fire outside of the tent took double the usual time in boiling the kettle; and the pemmican which we had for dinner to-day, for the first time since we left the ship, was hard frozen when taken out of the case.

I had a shot at an eider duck which alighted in the bay. A few glaucus gulls (*Larus glaucus*) flew past the little inlet, which I named Sophia Cove. I occupied myself this evening with my plans of search. Had the last of our Burton ale to-day, and turned into our sleeping-bags at about 10 P.M.

Saturday, 4th September.

WEATHER much the same as yesterday, prevented us from putting to sea ; but, as the wind and snowdrift had somewhat abated, I formed a party for a bear-hunting excursion to the top of the bay, when just as we were getting our guns ready for starting, bruin himself anticipated our purpose by suddenly making his appearance, and thus saved us a day's buffeting with this inclement weather. One of the boat's crew having reported him in sight, on going outside of the tent I saw a fine full-grown bear (*Ursus maritimus*) sauntering leisurely along the beach, about midway between us and a point towards the entrance to the bay, to which I gave the name of Bear Point. As his course was direct for the encampment, I ordered my party within the tent, to avoid alarming him, whilst I watched his movements from the door. Bruin, however, evidently suspecting that all was not right, suddenly altered his course to pass inland of the tent, at the back of the shingle ridge above it. The instant he disappeared behind the ridge, I made direct for it, to intercept him, desiring my party to be ready with their rifles to cut off his retreat should he happen to escape the fire from my old double-barrel, which had, a quarter of a century before, been fatal to bruin's race in the Island of Spitzbergen. On my rising the ridge, bruin turned his head inland, when, after firing both barrels, the ball from the second one brought him on his haunches, at the distance of sixty yards from me. It was only for an instant, however, for he gathered himself up again, and retreated towards the beach, evidently mortally wounded ; and after running the gauntlet of a whole volley of balls from the rifles and muskets of the boat's crew, who, being too eager and excited, I suppose, fired so hurriedly that not a ball took effect ; and under their fire he took to the water, swimming out into the bay for the distance of two or three hundred yards, when he wore round with his head in shore, unable any longer to make head against the wind, which was blowing dead on shore. His last efforts to struggle against it must have been desperate, for he had no sooner borne up than his huge form floated on the water a lifeless mass, just as I was about launching the boat to go in pursuit of him. After a short interval the wind drifted him on shore about two hundred yards from our encampment, to which we bore him on the sledge ; and, cold as it was, set about skinning him immediately ; when, strange enough, we found on examination that my second ball was the only one that had struck him, entering about a foot above the insertion of the tail, and an inch on the left side of the spine, literally drilling him through, and making its exit by the mouth, splintering two of the canine teeth as it passed out. As a proof of the extreme tenacity of life in these hardy creatures, this animal had one of the largest internal arteries divided by the ball in its course, which poured out so much blood that it was streaming from his mouth and nostrils in such a torrent as to dye the surf around him of a deep crimson colour as we hauled him up on the beach, and on opening the body a deluge of the crimson fluid flowed out. Yet with this deadly wound he managed to run at his usual speed about two hundred yards to the beach, and then swim against a head sea for at the least as great a distance further, making fearful struggles until the moment of his last gasp for breath.

He measured seven and a half feet in length, was finely moulded, and in excellent condition. We had a rump steak off him, as an addition to our pemmican dinner, and found it infinitely better eating than some of the beef I have tasted which had been supplied the ship. At midnight the wind veered round more to the north, with a dark horizon in that quarter. Thermometer 26° Fahr.



Sketched by R. McCormick, R.N

Encampment in Griffin Bay.

Sunday, 5th September.

No change in the weather, boisterous as ever, and thermometer at 26°. Had bear steaks for breakfast. Read part of the Morning Service to my party in the tent. Saw several seals swimming about the bay, and another bear on the floe at its upper end, but not within our reach: I could just make him out with the aid of my telescope. An ivory gull (*Larus eburneus*), showing great confidence, hovered about the remains of bruin during the greater part of the day, apparently enjoying a most sumptuous feast. Several glaucus gulls shyly hovered over in passing by, but did not venture to alight: saw also a solitary snow bunting.

Night threatening, with a black and lurid sky, still blowing hard, with much surf in the bay. Wind shifted round to its old quarter in the N.W. again, with the thermometer down to 24°, and bitterly cold.

Monday, 6th September.

ROSE at 6 A.M. Wind more off the land and somewhat moderated, with less sea on outside ; the young ice at the upper inlet of the bay which had been broken up by the swell setting on it during the gale, was drifting out past us in considerable quantity, forming a belt along shore.

Commenced preparations for shifting our encampment into the next bay, as soon as the swell along shore subsided sufficiently to enable us to get the boat afloat, and round the headland, the vicinity of which, and summit of Cape Bowden, I was anxiously desirous of more thoroughly examining than my time permitted of when outward bound. Erected a cairn upon the ridge where we had encamped, and deposited beneath it a cylinder containing a record of our proceedings.

At 10.30 A.M., on the wind and sea going down, we launched the boat, and had to row through sludge and brash, intermixed with hard floe pieces of the bay or young ice, which so impeded the progress of the boat that the crew had a most laborious hour's pull in getting through little more than a mile of it.

We landed at our old place of encampment en-passant to look for the musk-ox skull which we had accidentally left there. But the change which the place had undergone during our absence had been so great that we could barely recognize it. The heavy seas setting upon this shore during the late almost continuous succession of north-westerly gales had washed away the old beach, and thrown ridge upon ridge of shingle higher up the embankment, bringing the spot where our tent stood some yards nearer to the water's edge. We could nowhere find the horns ; they must either have been washed away or buried beneath the confused heaps of shingle and huge hummocks of stranded ice.

At 1 P.M., after rounding Cape M'Bain, we hauled the boat up on a hard shingly beach, on the north side of Clark Bay, about half way up, and pitched the tent on a fine dry part of the ridge, on the margin of a frozen lake. Saw several gulls sitting on the beach ; and just as I landed a solitary raven (*Corvus corax*), hovering overhead to reconnoitre our proceedings, fell a victim to his curiosity. I fired at him, and he fell dead upon the surface of the frozen lake. This bay appears to be a favourite retreat of the ravens ; we saw several on our last visit here, but none elsewhere. At 3 P.M. we had our usual warm mess for dinner, and opened the last gutta-percha case of biscuit. Three of our party having eaten rather too freely of the bear's liver for supper last night, complained to-day of violent headache, which readily yielded to a smart cathartic dose of medicine.

At 5 P.M. I left the encampment, accompanied by one of my party, on a searching excursion over the ridges round the bay, to the summit of Cape Bowden, a distance of about six miles from the tent. Our course lay over a succession of ridges, and through ravines filled with deep snow, in many places above the knees at every step we set, and in the snow drifts crossing some of the deep hollows even up to the waist. We had to climb one very steep hill, separated from Cape Bowden by a deep saddle-like depression, nearly filled by a frozen lake. We rapidly descended to this, but had another toilsome ascent up the steep acclivities of the Cape ; and on reaching the summit had to walk a mile further over deep snow before I found the "Rescue's"

cairn, which stands on the southern extremity of the ridge. We reached the spot at 7 P.M. I drew from beneath the pile of stones a broken common green quart bottle, containing a gutta-percha case, enclosing the usual printed notice on yellow paper left by the searching parties from the "Lady Franklin" and "Sophia." I tore a leaf from my memorandum book, and wrote on it a record of my visit, which I put in, and replaced the bottle in the cairn. Having taken a rough sketch of the coast, extending from Point Bowden to Cape Spencer, the whole outline of which appeared displayed beneath as on a map from this elevation, I commenced my return, and on reaching the extreme craggy north point of the ridge, I took another sketch of our encampment on the other side of Clark Bay, with Cape Grinnell and the headlands seen jutting out beyond it to the north. The spot on which I stood was a rugged crag, overhanging Wellington Channel; the chasm or deep gorge which cleft the crag in two, forming a steep and precipitous descent to the beach below, was in part treacherously arched over with a frail crust of snow, rendering it a dangerous place to approach in a thick snow-drift, as one false step would hurl the wanderer headlong into the frowning gulf below. The brown weather-worn surface of the limestone strata was so arranged in horizontal layers on either side as to resemble reams of brown paper piled one above another more than anything else; as these vertical sections, on which the snow could find no resting-place, peered from beneath its otherwise universal covering of the land. In the valley beneath lay the still frozen surface of the lake. Looking up channel the northern horizon presented a very remarkable tint of the deepest indigo blue—a peculiar tint, I do not recollect ever having seen before, and bounding it like a narrow band or streak, the sky elsewhere being overcast all round, with the exception of a wild glare of light which gleamed through the black canopy shrouding Cornwallis Land on the opposite shore. I heard the lively note of the snow-bunting, the only indication of life around us in this still and desolate solitude. We neither saw bird or beast else throughout the whole of our excursion. Occasionally a track of the fox or hare met the eye, and we saw the footprints of the ptarmigan (*Tetrao lagopus*) on the acclivity of Cape Bowden.

After descending from the crag into the valley to the lake beneath, we toiled up the steep face of the ridge on the other side, not a little jaded and fatigued with the rough and rugged outward journey, and the agreeable prospect before us of a return over the same course, now with monotony instead of novelty for companionship. It was now 8 P.M., and we reached the tent at 10 P.M. Thermometer down to 21°. Night foggy, with light airs.

Tuesday, 7th September.

THE wind this morning suddenly shifted round to the S.W., accompanied by a fall of snow, which, with a strong breeze blowing, confined us to the tent until about 5 P.M., when the weather cleared up, but the wind being against our going down channel, together with some heavy streams of bay ice in the offing, brought over from the opposite shore by the shift of wind, delayed our departure to-day.

At the time of setting the first watch for the night, the moon appeared in a bright crescent form, shining forth through an opening in some light fleecy clouds, which were passing across the clear blue ethereal sky; the evening star was peeping over the ridge at the back of the tent, twinkling with unusual brightness, just above a faint red streak of light which skirted the horizon; and here and there a star of the first magnitude was just becoming visible in the zenith and the western portion of the heavens. The thermometer had fallen to 24° .

Wednesday, 8th September.

THIS is the first fine day that we have really had since we left the ship; the sun, which for the last three weeks has been an entire stranger to us, now shone forth from a clear blue sky. When I registered the thermometer, however, at six o'clock this morning, it was as low as twenty degrees below the freezing point, having fallen no less than twelve degrees during the night—from 24° to 12° . The maximum during our voyage of three weeks was only 31° , minimum 12° , and the mean 21° , never having at any time risen above the freezing point. The mean of eight days, taken with the aneroid before it was damaged, was $29^{\circ} 54'$. It was bitterly cold within the tent, my south-wester, mitts, and Esquimaux boots were hard frozen under my head, where they had formed a substitute for a pillow.

After breakfast we built our last cairn on the spot of our last bivouac, and buried beneath it a tin cylinder containing the following record of our proceedings:—

MEMO.—A boat expedition up Wellington Channel in search of Sir John Franklin. Left Her Majesty's ship "North Star" at Erebus and Terror Bay, Beechey Island, on Thursday morning the 19th of August, and after a close examination of Baring Bay by sledging round its shores on the snow, without finding any opening to the eastward, on returning down channel searched every bay, inlet, and headland along the coast without discovering any traces of the lost ships. Encamped here on Monday, September 6th, and the boat is now launching to return to the ship. The weather throughout the whole of this time has been most tempestuous—continued gales of wind, accompanied by thick weather and a short, broken sea with a heavy swell, very dangerous for boats. The thermometer, which has never been above the freezing point, fell last night twelve degrees, from 24° to 12° Fahr. The young ice formed in the bay, and the whole of the land is enveloped in a white mantle of snow. But few animals have been seen, vegetation being very scanty. Traces of the musk ox, however, and its horns were found, and three hares seen in this bay. On Saturday last I shot a large bear on the south side of Griffin Bay.

R. M'CORMICK, Officer Commanding Party.

Wednesday Morning, Sept. 8th, 1851.

Having struck the tent and stowed the boat, we launched her at 10.30 A.M. and made sail with a fresh and fair breeze round Cape Bowden, outside of which there was still a short broken sea in the channel; but we carried on through it without taking in a reef. Reached Cape Spencer at 4 P.M., after a fine passage of five hours and a half, under sail the whole way. Here we hauled the boat into a small creek between the shingle ridges, and lighting a fire on the bank of shingle, commenced cooking our dinner, when a boat under sail, and standing towards us, hove in sight, coming round the point of the shingle spit which divides Erebus and Terror Bay from Union Bay, and on which the graves are situated. On reaching us we found that it was the second gig, in charge of the second master, with provisions to be left en caché at Cape Osborn; but she was far too late to have the slightest chance of accomplishing this object. In my own mind I doubted much her reaching even our last place of encampment, which we left this morning.

The news we obtained from her of the arrival of Lady Franklin's vessel, the "Isabel," from England during our absence, having only sailed again this morning on her homeward voyage, was quite unexpected.

I winged a young silvery gull here (*Larus argentatus*) which I took on board with me alive.

As soon as we had finished our dinner we shoved off, and instead of going round Beechey Island made sail across Union Bay (the winter's floe having cleared out during our absence). The moon shone brightly forth just above the cairn on the summit of Cape Spencer. Rounding the point of the spit, on opening the "North Star," she hoisted her colours, and we ran up ours; the bugle sounded on board, which I answered by firing off my gun.

At 8.30 P.M. ran alongside, when I had the pleasing gratification of finding letters for myself from home, sent me by my friend Mr. Barrow, of the Admiralty, together with piles of newspapers brought out for the squadron.

The following is a list of the names of the crew, selected from ten volunteers who offered to accompany me in H.M. boat "Forlorn Hope."

Thomas Rands,	æt. 30,	Ice-quartermaster.
Edward Millikin,	„ 25,	Able seaman.
James Nugent,	„ 27,	Able seaman.
Eleazer J. Clark,	„ 39,	Royal Marines.
George Burns,	„ 25,	Able seaman.
John Frost,	„ 23,	Able seaman.

Of the cool, steady, praiseworthy conduct of all, the unanimous good feeling shown towards each other, and respectful attention to myself on all occasions, I cannot speak too highly. They deserve my warmest approbation; and I trust that their meritorious services will not pass unnoticed. Thomas Rands I found a most able and efficient petty officer. He also gave universal satisfaction in serving out our daily rations, which I committed to his charge.

R. M'CORMICK, R.N.

LIST OF GAME KILLED BY R. M'CORMICK, R.N.

	Names.						No.
Polar Bear	-	-	<i>Ursus maritimus</i>	-	-	-	1
Arctic Fox	-	-	<i>Canis lagopus</i>	-	-	-	2
Arctic Hare	-	-	<i>Lepus borealis</i>	-	-	-	6
Lemming	-	-	<i>Georychus lemmus</i>	-	-	-	1
Raven	-	-	<i>Corvus corax</i>	-	-	-	4
Ptarmigan	-	-	<i>Tetrao lagopus</i>	-	-	-	2
Greenland Finch	-	-	<i>Fringilla</i>	-	-	-	2
Sandpiper	-	-	<i>Tringa maritima</i>	-	-	-	4
Little Auk	-	-	<i>Alca alle</i>	-	-	-	4
Dovekie	-	-	<i>Uria grylle</i>	-	-	-	10
Loom	-	-	<i>Uria brunnichii</i>	-	-	-	2
Red-throated Diver	-	-	<i>Colymbus septentrionalis</i> (young)	-	-	-	1
Tern	-	-	<i>Sterna arctica</i>	-	-	-	1
Fulmar Petrel	-	-	<i>Procellaria glacialis</i>	-	-	-	2
Ivory Gull	-	-	<i>Larus eburneus</i>	-	-	-	2
Silvery Gull	-	-	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	-	-	-	2
Glaucous Gull	-	-	<i>Larus glaucus</i>	-	-	-	1
Eider Duck	-	-	<i>Anas mollissima</i>	-	-	-	9
Pintail Duck	-	-	<i>Anas caudacuta</i>	-	-	-	3
King Duck	-	-	<i>Anas spectabilis</i>	-	-	-	1
Total						-	60

DIMENSIONS of the POLAR BEAR (Male) shot September 4th, 1852, in Griffin Bay,
Wellington Channel.

	Feet.	Inches.
Length	7	6
Greatest circumference of body	5	6
Do. do. head	2	8
Do. do. neck	3	3
Length of head	1	6
Do. of fore-leg (from shoulder-joint)	3	2
Circumference of do.	2	2
Length of hind-leg (from hip-joint)	3	0
Circumference of do.	2	0
Length of fore paw	1	0
Circumference of do.	1	9
Length of hind paw	1	9
Circumference of do.	1	9
Estimated weight	1,000 lbs.	

CONCLUDING REMARKS

ON THE

SEARCH FOR SIR JOHN FRANKLIN,

THE PROBABLE POSITION OF THE "EREBUS" AND "TERROR," AND FATE OF THEIR CREWS.

My experience during the late voyage and winter, passed on the very same spot where Franklin spent his, and where all traces of him cease, have most decidedly confirmed me in the opinion I had ventured to express in my plans of search some five years ago,—viz., that the missing expedition passed up the Wellington Channel into the Polar Sea, and was to be sought amongst the archipelago of islands and drifting packs of ice with which that sea is most unquestionably encumbered, and where the search should be made with efficient well-equipped boats, adapted for encountering the packs of ice, strong currents, and dangerous intricacies, inseparable from such a navigation, promising nought else but destruction to ships. From boats alone could any hope be entertained of a rescue of our gallant countrymen, ere they fell victims to the combined effects of frost and famine,—for in these two expressive words all their privations may probably be summed up,—and, if too late to save them, of discovering any traces they may have left behind them.

At that early period of the search I believe I stood alone in this opinion. The general impression was that the ships had been arrested in the ice to the southward and westward of Melville Island; consequently, the main efforts for carrying on the search took that direction. There are few perhaps who will now dispute my views, or their originality, which the Parliamentary records have secured.

My reasons for coming to the conclusion I then did need not be recapitulated here, they having been fully explained in my plans submitted at the time, and, subsequently, in the year 1850-52, accompanied by the first proposal made for attempting the search in so high a latitude in an open boat, which I volunteered to conduct. This plan obtained the warm support of the Hydrographer, Rear Admiral Sir Francis Beaufort, and of Rear Admiral Sir Edward Parry, (with whom I made my first voyage towards the North Pole,) who recommended my employment in very favourable terms in their reports of approval annexed to my plans laid before Parliament.

I was at last sent out in the "North Star," but the position I was necessarily placed in in that ship was not such as to enable me to act in the noble cause in the way I had hoped, and, being somewhat anomalous, renders it incumbent on me to be careful that my share in the search is not left open to misconception. Here I may, therefore, be permitted to draw attention to the fact that, could I at once have proceeded up the Wellington Channel on the first arrival of the "North Star" at Beechey Island, on the 8th of August 1852, with my boat's crew of volunteers, instead

of being detained until the 19th of the same month,—by which delay we lost the last eleven fine days of the season, and best portion of it in which boating operations can be carried on in those seas, Wellington Channel being as open as the Atlantic, as far as the eye could reach from the summit of Beechey Island, which, with Cape Riley, I ascended on the day of my arrival; the season an unusually open one, with little or no ice, and the wind blowing from the southward and eastward, fresh and fair,—there was nothing to have prevented us from doubling Cape Sir John Franklin, and proceeding round by Jones Sound into Baffin Bay, before the north-westerly gales set in, which at a later period we met with; these winds would have proved fair for our return down Jones Sound, sheltered under the lee of the land, round by Lancaster Sound and Barrow Strait to Beechey Island, thus completing the circumnavigation of North Devon, and an entire examination of its shores. Subsequent events have proved that all this might have been accomplished in the season.

When we were enabled to get away from the ship winter had already, the day before, set in. After an absence of three weeks exposure to a succession of north-westerly gales, and, altogether, the most boisterous weather that I ever before experienced, as described in the preceding narrative; I, however, had the satisfaction of setting the Baring Bay question at rest; viz., that there is no communication whatever between that bay and Jones Sound.

After my return I wrote a letter to the commander of the expedition early in the spring, offering to explore Smith Sound into the Polar Ocean as far as the season would permit of, if I was given the command of the “Mary” yacht, a decked boat of twelve tons, cutter-rigged, and well adapted for such a service; as, in addition to the greater quantity of provisions and stores which she would stow for a prolonged search, she would also possess the advantage of greater safety in a sea that might endanger an open boat, more especially if deeply laden, as the “Forlorn Hope” was. My former boat’s crew having volunteered to accompany me again, and cheerfully expressed their willingness to follow me wherever I led them, it was my intention to have brought the “Mary” across the Atlantic home, after completing provisions and fuel at some one of the depôts at Pond’s Bay, or the southern shores of Lancaster Sound, instead of risking her getting beset for the winter in the heavy packs with which Barrow Strait was filled this season.

My object in the voyage up Smith’s Sound was to have made as near an approach to the Pole as the state of the ice would have permitted. I believe that if ever the North Pole is reached, it will be on the meridian of Smith Sound.

I may here offer a few suggestions on the probable fate of the missing ships and their crews; having myself entertained sanguine hopes of discovering some traces of them in the higher latitudes, which it was my intention, if possible, to have reached had the command of the “Mary” been given me. This, however, was declined by the Commodore, and in the answer which I received from him to my offer, dated on board the “Assistance,” 26th July 1853, the reason assigned was, that “Nothing now remains undone in that vicinity.” Every hope of making myself further useful in the cause being now at an end, I had no other alternative left me than to return home in the “Phoenix,” having done all that it was in my power to do.

There are several ways by which a ship may be destroyed—by fire, by foundering, by collision with ice, or by being driven on shore. Either of the first two casualties might easily enough happen to a single ship; but as it is in the highest degree improbable that two ships should together share the same fate, these two modes of accounting for the loss of the Polar ships may at once be disposed of. The third, by collision with ice, carries with it a

greater amount of probability. Even this, however, in the case of the "Erebus" and "Terror" seems to me a very unlikely catastrophe to have happened to two ships so strongly built, and so well additionally fortified by the stoutest doubling, as those ships were, rendering them capable of resisting an amount of pressure from ice truly astonishing, as I can, from my own personal observation, vouch for. Having seen them beset in the immense packs of ice in the Antarctic seas, consisting of floes, mostly of great thickness and density, the latter quality being greatly increased from the temperature never rising above the freezing point within the Antarctic circle even at midsummer, consequently exerting no thawing influence on those vast fields of ice, which, when put in motion during the agitation of the great southern ocean by heavy gales, I have often seen the strength of the "Erebus" most severely tested between huge dense masses of blue ice, violently grinding past her sides, tearing and rolling up her stout copper sheathing like so much ladies' curl-paper, whilst every beam and timber in her have been creaking and groaning, and the rudder almost wrung from its fastenings. Ice with which the floes and packs within the bays and straits of the Arctic circle can no more be compared, than the ice on the surface of the Serpentine can with the floes of Melville Bay. The only ice I have ever seen in the north at all to be compared with the southern packs occurs in the Spitzbergen seas.

I have entered more fully upon the effects of ice than I should otherwise have done, in consequence of having frequently heard the loss of the "Breadalbane" hired transport cited as an example of the loss of Sir John Franklin's ships, many persons jumping at once to the conclusion that the latter must have been crushed and ingulfed in the same summary way as the unlucky transport was. The two cases, however, are widely different. The "Breadalbane" was known to be an old vessel, which the owners had not sufficiently doubled or strengthened to enable her to resist even a moderate degree of pressure from two contending floes; the consequence was, they went through her bottom, and she disappeared beneath them within a quarter of an hour from the time she was first caught in the "nip," as I was a witness to myself from the deck of the "Phoenix," which ship was in the same "nip."

The American whaler "M'Lellen" lost in Melville Bay in the season of 1852, is another instance brought forward in support of this opinion; but she, also, was an old worn-out ship, and her timbers very defective where the floc-edge caught her side and stove her in. This I saw myself, as I went on board of her at the time, she having become a wreck immediately under the bows of the "North Star," carrying away that vessel's cathead. But to draw any comparison between those two vessels and the "Erebus" and "Terror," would be like comparing the cracking a hollow filbert with the hardest ivory nut.

Much has been said about the ships having been forced out of Erebus and Terror Bay, and of their having left indications behind them of a hurried departure. On what grounds these surmises have been founded it would be somewhat difficult to divine. I passed a whole year in that bay, and whatever may be said to the contrary, I believe it to be utterly impossible that any vessel could be driven out of it after having once been frozen in; a more safe bay for wintering in does not exist along the whole line of coast. Its very fault lies in its security, the difficulty in getting out again when once within it, as the bayfloe rarely breaks up before the end of August or beginning of September. The "North Star" getting on shore there had nothing whatever to do with the bay, and was an event in no way calculated to compromise its character for safety. The spot where the "Erebus" and "Terror" laid was evidently near its western extremity, in the curve of the bay formed by the shingle ridge, extending out from

Beechey Island on which "the graves" are situated; the close vicinity of the magnetic observatory, the armourer's forge, the washing place at the watercourse, and the small garden not much farther off, with the cairn above it—all combined to point out this as the winter quarters of the ships, and a more secure one could not well have been fixed upon. In fact it was the only position in this bay in which a ship would be altogether secure from being driven on shore by any sudden ingress of ice in the autumn, before the winter's floe was firmly formed; and, as such, could not fail to have been selected by one of Sir John Franklin's judgment and experience. I saw nothing whatever in support of the notion that the departure of the ships was a hurried one, but much to convince me that Franklin and those with him had not idly passed their winter here, to which the sites of tents in various directions, sledge-tracks, and everything else bore ample testimony.

Further, I am of opinion that sledging-parties from his ships had been up the Wellington Channel, and reasoning upon what I know may be accomplished, even in mid-winter, where energy exists, as in such men as Franklin and my lamented friend, that soul of enterprise, the noble-minded Bellôt, these sledge journeys were very probably extended beyond Cape Lady Franklin—even to the portal of the Polar Ocean. Their tracks round Cape Spenceer in the direction of Cape Bowden, clearly point out the course they had in view; here no inducement could be held out to the sportsman to tarry, there is not even sufficient game for a single gun, far less to render it an eligible spot for pitching a tent as a mere shooting station.

The swampy flat, intersected by small lakes and watercourses, in the vicinity of Caswall Tower, is the only spot where the very few straggling wild fowl that alight in this barren limestone region, on their way north, are to be met with; and here I have followed Franklin's sledge tracks over the low shingle ridges in the direction of the tower, which was doubtless their shooting station. The sledges must have passed in the summer season when the soil was plastic enough to leave impressions of their tracks behind them. Caswall Tower is an isolated precipitous mount between three and four hundred feet in height, rising from a plain at the head of Radstock Bay and Gascoigne Cove, which I ascended, but found nothing whatever on its bare flat top, save a solitary lemming, which I captured. At its base are several circular ancient Esquimaux encampments, within which the wild flowers flourish more luxuriantly than in any other spot I met with. The distance is about ten miles from the ship.

The greatest mystery of all is, that of no record having been left of their sojourn or departure; so sanguine was I for a time, that something might turn up to reward a diligent and persevering search, that I did not rest until I had closely examined every foot of ground for miles around; ascending and descending every hill and ravine around the bay, and rambling over the mountain limestone table land, far inland, till there was not a rock or ravine on the land, or hummock of ice on the floe, within a circuit of many miles, that was not as familiar to me as "household words."

From my own experience, throughout a somewhat more severe winter, perhaps, than ordinary, I believe that sledge travelling may be continued during an Arctic winter, without much risk or danger being incurred from the lowest temperature; provided care is taken to erect a snow hut, or, in cases of emergency when no time is to be lost, to cut a deep trench in the snow in time to secure shelter from an approaching gale and snow drift. It must be kept in mind, that the same degree of cold which can be borne without inconvenience in a calm cannot be faced without severe frost bites in a strong breeze of wind.

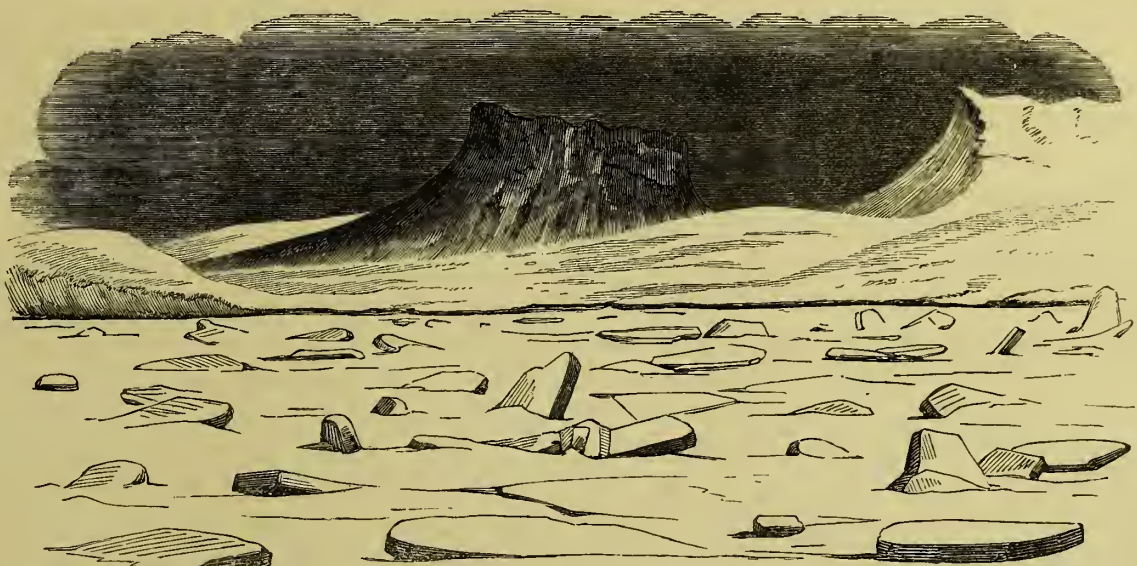
In thus recording my opinion of the practicability of sledge travelling in the winter season, I have the testimony of those enterprising Arctic travellers Kennedy and Bellôt, in my favour, who, during the "Prince Albert's" voyage, practised it most successfully in mid-winter. I also have had opportunities of fairly testing the effects of a very low temperature on my own person on more than one occasion. My customary walk throughout the winter, whatever the state of the weather might be, was round Beechey Island, a distance of about six miles. This I accomplished once when the thermometer was 54° below zero on the floe, and to that low temperature I was exposed for two hours, without feeling any inconvenience from it, but there was little or no wind at the time.

On another occasion I passed a whole day and night without food, or shelter, beyond what the snow-drift afforded, about seven miles from the ship, having been overtaken by a dense fog on the open plain when returning from an excursion to Caswall Tower, accompanied by my friend Dr. Toms, of the "North Star," and "Erebus" and "Terror," my two Esquimaux dogs. When overwhelmed by the darkness of night blending with the fog, and a gale approaching, we cut with a hunting knife a trench in the snow-clad plain, about two feet deep; and in this truly Arctic bivouac (at all times to be found) we, with our canine friends, passed the night, without a tent or other clothing than our usual walking dress.

The gale which swept over us soon forming a white coverlet of snow-drift, protected us from the blast, less than an hour's exposure to the inclemency and intensity of cold of which would inevitably have ended in our destruction; not even the dogs would have survived it. The thermometer that night fell to 32° below zero, or 64° below the freezing point. The fog clearing off sufficiently to make out the land, about four o'clock in the morning we started again, and reached the ship between six and seven A.M., without having incurred even a frostbite, and after an ablution and breakfast, felt as fresh as ever.

I am, therefore, led to the conclusion, that Sir John Franklin's travelling parties may have commenced their journeys up the Wellington Channel, with the first appearance of the sun above the horizon early in the month of February, and after the discovery that the strait between the Franklin Capes in the Queen's Channel opened into a Polar ocean, started with his ships as soon as the bay ice broke up, most probably about the first week in September; and if he had an open season would, with the aid of his screw-propellers, run up the Wellington Channel within the space of eight-and-forty hours. Then, probably tempted by the broad expanse of open water to the northward, or at any rate absence of land to obstruct his progress in that direction, he might reach a very high latitude, and gain a good offing of the Parry Islands, before he shaped a south-westerly course for Behring's Strait. As the season for navigation remained after the first of September, would be, however, necessarily a very short one, he was probably overtaken by winter, perhaps some six or seven hundred miles from Cape Lady Franklin, in a high latitude, and possibly well to the westward.

Having thus attempted to follow up the track of the unfortunate ship so far, by something like inductive reasoning, founded on inferences drawn from a knowledge of the object they had in view, and the most probable events and incidents likely to beset them in their path to mar its attainment, we now enter upon a field of speculation, wide enough indeed to fill a volume of itself. Having already extended these remarks to a greater length than I had intended, I will wind them up with a few words on the conclusion I have come to in my own mind, as to the fate of our gallant countrymen. Speculative as any opinion upon this subject, I am aware, must ne-



Sketched by R. M'Cormick, R.N.

Caswall Tower, from Beechey Island.

cessarily be, I have not arrived at mine either prematurely or hastily. No one but those who may have near relatives in the expedition, can possibly have felt deeper interest in this hapless search from first to last than I have, unless it is my friend Mr. Barrow, whose untiring exertions and devotion in this noble cause stand unequalled. Various associations combined to enlist my own sympathies in this search. They were my old ships, and engaged in a field of discovery to which I have long been ardently devoted, and in which my thoughts have been centred from my earliest youth, in addition to which there were those on board of both ships who were well known to me.

My own impression is, that on the closing in of their second winter, the ships were either driven into some inlet, where they may have been blocked up ever since by the Polar pack, as happened to the "Investigator" in Mercy Bay; or that they have been driven on shore by the strong currents which set from the north-westward, when helplessly beset in the pack, drifting about in the narrow straits which separate one island from another in this Arctic archipelago.

They may, possibly, have reached even as far west as that large tract of land whose mountainous and lofty granitic peaks were seen by the "Herald," thus barring their further progress westward. But, under any of these circumstances, it does not follow that the lives of those on board would be necessarily involved in immediate destruction, even were the ships stranded on some shore. They would, in all probability, be able to save the greater part of their provisions and stores (as Sir Edward Parry did in the loss of the "Fury," on Fury Beach; and which, years afterwards, proved the happy means of preserving the lives of Sir John Ross and his party). They might build huts and supply themselves with fuel from the wreck, and linger out an existence as long as their resources lasted. But here, however reluctantly, I must at the same time acknowledge that there would be but little prospect of adding much to these in the region in which their disaster would be likely to happen. In proof of this, I have only to add that had I lost my boat and the provisions when up the Wellington Channel, my boat's crew and myself could not have existed—although numbering only seven—on the produce of our guns, for one month; and I had two or three good shots in my party, besides being myself an old sportsman, and rarely threw away a shot without obtaining something for it. Wild fowl, doubtless, migrate to the very Pole itself to rear their young, but this occupies only a short period of the season; and the supplies to be obtained from such an uncertain source would be inadequate even for present wants, far less so to form a winter's store for a ship's company.

Sad as the reflection must be, it is in vain to deny that the time has arrived when, indeed, it is "hoping against hope," and which suggested to me the name of "Forlorn Hope" for my boat. Nearly nine years have now elapsed since our countrymen left these shores; and although I have been to the last one of the most sanguine in my hopes, I cannot help feeling now that traces of their fate, is all, unhappily, I have too much reason to fear, that remains to be discovered of them. But even this, in my opinion, will never be accomplished by ships. Nought else than the disastrous fate of the gallant Franklin and his followers can be possibly anticipated as the result of any attempt made by ships.

R. M'CORMICK, R.N.

SUGGESTIONS

FOR THE

PRESERVATION OF HEALTH IN POLAR CLIMES.

HAVING had under consideration the best means of escaping scurvy, and preserving health in the Arctic regions, I deem it my duty to submit the following brief remarks for the use of future voyagers. In so doing, I shall confine myself wholly to the results of my own experience during a period of some years passed in the higher latitudes, feeling confident that attention to the precepts here inculcated will secure for those who may follow me as successful an exemption from scurvy and sickness as have crowned my own efforts, by a rigid adherence to them.

In the first place, I would unhesitatingly recommend the *entire exclusion* of all kinds of salted meats from the diet, convinced as I am, from long experience and close attention to the effects of such food, that it proves, through its indigestibility and deficient nutrient properties, injurious to the system, and deteriorating the condition of the circulating fluids and secretions generally,—inducing a debilitated habit of body, favourable to the production of scurvy, under circumstances of privation and exposure, and other exciting influences, calculated to call it into action. In fact, it is my belief that the origin of every case of scurvy may be fairly traced to the use of salted meats.

In the present age of inventions and improvements, there can be no lack of substitutes, and excellent ones too, for the hard salt beef and pork, and the whole category of dried tongues, hams, &c., which constituted the sea stock of bygone years, when every ship in a long voyage, as in Anson's time, lost great numbers of the crew.

Now, we have preserved meats, poultry, soups, pemmican, and fresh bacon of all kinds. The latter article, which was supplied for the first time to the expedition now out, especially that preserved in tins for the use of travelling parties, proved the most valuable addition of all to the scale of Arctic victualling, its freshness and mildness rendering it easy of digestion, and its fatty quality rendering it highly nutritious by affording a large supply of carbonaceous material to make up for the constant waste occasioned by the increased exhalation of carbon which accompanies the activity of the respiration in very low temperatures of the atmosphere.

The various kinds of vegetables, when carefully selected and preserved, are quite equal to the fresh ones; more especially the preserved potato, carrot, parsnip, turnip, and peas; and I cannot speak too highly of those bottled fruits, as the damson, greengage, currant and raspberry, gooseberry, and that perhaps best of all antiscorbutic fruit, the cranberry, which is quite equal to the lime-juice in its valuable properties: all these fruits are quite as good as when first gathered.

Dried fruits—apples, figs, prunes, raisins, and almonds, &c., are all objectionable.

The best diluents are tea, coffee, and chocolate, more especially the patent chocolate which the travelling parties were supplied with in the last expedition. Of spirits and wines, the less taken the better; good sound malt liquors are preferable in all respects, combining, as they do, a nutritive with a stimulating property.

On the subject of clothing, I have only to observe that I found the Government pilot-cloth suit, with a "sou'-wester," the most generally useful in summer or winter; but for boating or sledging, in severe weather, I know of nothing equal to the Exquimaux seal-skin dress and fur boots.* A common blanket bag I have always found far more comfortable than a felt one for sleeping in, when away travelling, with a buffalo robe beneath it.

Of medical treatment, little is required. The bracing effects of a low, dry temperature, and the absence of all moisture in the atmosphere for a large portion of the year, so that not a cloud can form in the clear blue sky, render catarrhal and other affections resulting from atmospheric transitions of rare occurrence.

During the dark and monotonous season of winter, active exercise in the open air, on the floe or on the land, is the very best preservative of health, aided by proper attention to diet; the mind being at the same time engaged in rational occupations, reading, writing, sketching, or whatever may be the bent of individual taste.

When sufficient exercise is not taken, and the diet has been too full and liberal, a congestive state of the internal organs is often the result, attended with a drowsiness during the day and broken rest at night. The best remedy I have found in such cases is a six-grain dose of calomel, and, to allay the disposition to watchfulness, about a scruple of the compound ipecacuanha or Dover's powder, given at bed-time. Loss of appetite, from want of tone and energy in the digestive organs, sometimes follows the effects of a long and tedious winter in some constitutions. A wineglassful of quinine wine, given twice a day, is the most efficacious remedy in these cases; it is best prepared by dissolving about a scruple of quinine, with the same quantity of citric acid, in a wineglassful of water, and then adding it to a bottle of wine, either port or sherry, as may best suit the occasion.

In conclusion, I have only to add, in confirmation of these views, that in three voyages which I have made to the Polar regions—two to the north and one to the south, the latter of four years' duration,—embracing every possible transition of climate and exposure, I have never lost a single life, or even had a case of serious sickness or scurvy throughout a period of Polar service falling little short of seven years.

R. M'CORMICK, R.N.

* Those supplied to the expedition by Mr. Richard Jeffs, of No. 1, Hanway Street, Oxford Street, I believe gave much satisfaction.

Dr. M'CORMICK to Captain Sir E. BELCHER, C.B., H.M.S. "Assistance."

Her Majesty's Ship "North Star," Erebus and Terror Bay,
3d March 1853.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you a narrative of my boat expedition up Wellington Channel, and sledge journey round Baring Bay, in search of Sir John Franklin.

Having left the ship on the morning of the 19th of August, and returned on board again on the night of the 8th of September last, after an absence of three weeks, during the whole of which time the weather was most unfavourable for boat service, having been tempestuous and overcast in the extreme,—a succession of north-westerly gales, which, with strong currents, rendered the navigation of this channel a very dangerous one for boats, and not a place of shelter between the last bay and Baring Bay.

After a week passed in a most careful search of Baring Bay all round, and ascending the inland ridges of hills, I neither found an opening to the eastward or a surface practicable for sledging over inland; the whole forming a succession of steep ridges, with intervening ravines filled with snow, and running parallel with the top of the bay.

There was no indication whatever of open water in the vicinity; the gulls and other sea-fowl never shaped their course to the eastward.

Therefore in all probability Jones Sound, instead of continuing its course to the westward from Baffin Bay, soon trends round to the north-west. On my return down channel I carefully examined every headland and bay, unhappily without finding the slightest trace of the missing ships.

Five of these bays, and several of the most prominent headlands between Point Bowden and Cape Osborn, not laid down in the charts, I have availed myself of the usual privilege of explorers, and given names to them.

My party returned on board in good health; and I have great satisfaction in bearing testimony to their exceeding good conduct, and they having volunteered to accompany me again in the spring search, I have herewith to submit for your consideration my purposed plan for carrying out that search.

In your letter of the 13th of August last I was told that the "Assistance" and "Pioneer" would complete the search of the Wellington Channel, and that my course must be to the eastward of this meridian. Sledging, therefore, will be entirely out of the question, as Lancaster's Sound opens too early to permit of travelling over the ice to any distance and back again.

The boat, however, which I had last (and we have none better adapted on board) is wholly inadequate for so long a voyage as the one contemplated, viz., the exploration of Jones and Smith Sounds, more especially as since your departure Commander Inglefield, in the "Isabel," has been so far up both these sounds as to render it very improbable that a boat, stowing barely a month's provisions, could remain out sufficiently long to enable her to accomplish anything beyond what he has already done.

The plan, therefore, I have to propose is, that the "Mary" yacht, left by Admiral Sir John Ross, and now lying here useless, should be placed at my disposal, with two additional hands, and provisioned for three months, with a gutta percha boat (left here by the "Prince Albert") for hauling over the ice, should the floes in the sounds not have broken up. To start immediately after the return of the party, conveying your authority so to do, and by which time the navigation in Barrow Strait will most probably be open.

I am, &c.

R. M'CORMICK, R.N.

P.S. The departure of the sledge parties for the rendezvous depôts, being a month earlier than anticipated, a series of sketches, comprising the headlands and bays between Beechey Island and Point Hogarth, Baring Bay (which I had taken for the purpose of illustrating a track-chart on which they are laid down from compass bearings), not being finished, I must reserve for a future opportunity.—R. M'C.

The SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY to Dr. M'CORMICK, R.N.

SIR,

Admiralty, 13th October 1853.

I AM commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to acknowledge the receipt of your narrative of an expedition under your orders in a boat of H.M. Discovery Ship "North Star," up the eastern shore of Wellington Channel and round Baring Bay, for the purpose of discovering traces of Sir John Franklin's expedition.

My Lords approve of your exertions on this occasion, and of the conduct of your boat's crew on a service incurring both risk and hardship, and are satisfied with the efforts you made in determining the important question as to there being any connexion between Baring Bay and Jones Sound.

I am, &c.

(Signed) W. A. B. HAMILTON.

A P P E N D I X.

A P P E N D I X.

No. 1.

R. M'CORMICK Esq., to the SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY

Apsley Cottages, Twickenham Green,
27th November, 1851.

SIR,

MAY I request that you will be pleased to acquaint my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that I am ready and willing as ever to conduct a "boat and sledge expedition" in search of Her Majesty's ships "Erebus and Terror," under the command of Captain Sir John Franklin?

Having been the *first* to propose the mode of search by "*boat and sledge*," as well as the *first* to point out the *Wellington Channel* as the course taken by the missing expedition in the attempt to accomplish the "North-west passage," now placed almost beyond a doubt by the traces found at Cape Riley and Beechey Island,—the very spots named in the plan I had the honour of submitting to their Lordships on the 1st of January 1850 as the first to be searched for memorials, and the most likely places for striking upon the track of the missing ships,—affords the surest guarantee for the successful execution of a project so auspiciously planned.

I have, &c.

R. M'CORMICK,
Surgeon, R.N.

No. 2.

PLAN OF SEARCH, by Boat and Sledge, for the Rescue of Captain Sir JOHN FRANKLIN and the Crews of Her Majesty's Ships "Erebus" and "Terror," or the discovery of their Fate.

Expedition after expedition, both by sea and land, have been sent forth by England and by America, by public and by private enterprise, in search of our lost countrymen, and returned again and again, leaving their fate as inexplicable a mystery as ever.

Yet, strange enough, not one of those expeditions have explored *Smith Sound*, at the head of Baffin's Bay, looked into it, or even made the attempt. Although, next to Wellington Channel, the most promising and important opening to the Polar Ocean, within the icebound recesses of which there can now scarcely be entertained a rational doubt that the ill-fated "Erebus" and "Terror" have been inextricably beset, or wrecked amongst the heavy packs and archipelago of islands by which, in all probability, that ocean is encumbered.

My own opinion has ever been that Sir John Franklin went up the Wellington Channel, and, consequently, the surest way to find him would be, not only to follow upon his track up that channel, and to the northward and westward of the Parry group of land, but also to meet him in any retrograde movement he might be compelled to make to the eastward, should his ships, in the attempt to get to the westward, be driven by the strong currents from the *north-west* to the meridian of the Sounds at the northern extremity of Baffin's Bay; a by no means improbable event, and one that should not be lost sight of. If Smith and Jones's Sounds should prove to be openings into the Polar Ocean, as I long ago anticipated, they would offer the readiest means of exit to either ships or boats, with the prospect before them of falling in with some whaler.

It was under this impression that I offered my services, as long ago as the year 1849, to go out in Her Majesty's Ship "North Star," to conduct a boat expedition up those Sounds, volunteering at the same time to winter on the coast in a log-hut, if provided with a whale boat and half a dozen hands, &c. This offer, although most favourably reported upon by Captain Sir Edward Parry, was declined by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

On the 1st of January 1850 I laid another plan before their Lordships for the exploration of the Wellington Channel by boat and sledge. In that plan I made the following remarks:—"Wellington Channel, however, of all the probable openings into the Polar Sea, possesses the highest degree of interest, and the exploration of which is of paramount importance," &c. "That Sir John Franklin's ships have been arrested in a high latitude, and beset in the heavy Polar ice northward of the Parry Islands, and that their probable course thither has been through the Wellington Channel," &c.

"I would propose commencing the search from *Cape Riley* or *Beechey Island* in a northerly direction, carefully examining every remarkable headland and indentation of the western coast of North Devon for memorials of the missing expedition," &c.

Since these remarks were written, the cape and island have become well known as the first winter quarters of the unfortunate ships, and it may appear a striking coincidence that I should have named these very spots. The motive for my doing so, however, is easily explained. The very suitable position of the little bay at Cape Riley, so well protected by Beechey Island, which formed a natural fender for keeping off the heavy flocks and pack ice, at once pointed it out as a most desirable harbour for the ships at the very threshold of their enterprise, and could not fail, on glancing over the chart, to rivet the attention of an experienced and practised eye.

Again, in a subsequent letter to the Board, dated 20th February 1850, I stated, "The route which I am the most desirous and anxious to follow is by the Wellington Channel, so strongly impressed am I with the conviction that it affords one of the best chances of crossing the track of the missing expedition, for the reasons already stated in my plan now under their Lordships' consideration."

In these views of the position I had assigned to the missing expedition I believe I at the time stood alone. The generally received opinion having been that Sir John Franklin's ships had been arrested in the ice to the southward and westward of Cape Walker or Melville Island. The results of the late searching parties have, however, proved beyond a doubt the correctness of my own views, even to the finding of traces, if not a memorial, (which, however, I believe, yet remains to be discovered,) at Cape Riley and Beechey Island.

Although none could have felt more keenly than I did the disappointment in not having been permitted to carry out either of my projects, feeling as I then did so confident that success would have crowned my efforts, I nevertheless, even now, am as sanguine as ever that it is not yet too late to save some gallant fellows, if not all, from a lingering fate, too fearful to dwell upon,—from a living tomb.

My own personal knowledge of the resources available for sustaining life within the arctic regions forbids the thought that a hundred and thirty fellow beings in the full vigour of manhood have already succumbed under the effects of cold, famine, or disease, without one individual being left to tell the sad and melancholy tale.

The "snow hut" would afford them shelter from the weather, the skin of the seal protection from the cold, its blubber light and fuel. The "*Andromeda tetragona*," a plant of the heath tribe, widely spread over arctic lands, and which I have myself gathered in the northernmost known land, Spitzbergen, where it grows in considerable abundance, offers another source from which fuel may be obtained. Vast flocks of waterfowl which annually migrate to their breeding-places in the very depths of the arctic solitudes, where they can rear their young unmolested by man or beast, probably beyond even the range of that restless wanderer of the snowy wastes, the arctic fox,—these birds would be easily captured whilst moulting and unable to fly, and with their eggs furnish a wholesome supply of food for each succeeding winter's store. Scurvy is the foe, after all, the most to be dreaded, and progressively so with the lapse of time, and gradual decline of the vital powers, but even this scourge, whilst it sweeps off the despondent and indolent, oft spares the buoyant and energetic.

My firm belief that the crews of my old ships the "*Erebus*" and "*Terror*," or a remnant of them, are still in existence, is founded on some years personal experience in frozen climes, both Arctic and Antarctic, and my observations as a naturalist on the habits and instincts of animals, with their geographical distribution over the surface of the globe, from pole to pole, leads me to the conclusion that the means of sustenance will not be wanting. Under this conviction, my enthusiasm in this noble cause will never cease to prompt me to come forward to their rescue on every occasion that may offer for carrying out my plan of relief, till the problem has been solved that shall decide their fate, and not till then.

Once more, therefore, and for the fourth time, I may be allowed to call the attention of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to a reconsideration of my plan, and if above four years of unceasing and unwearied application to be employed in the Franklin search be any proof of zeal, perseverance, and devotedness of purpose, and these qualities, when backed by experience, considered fitting qualifications for such an undertaking, I trust that their Lordships will permit me to have some share in the search on its renewal in the forthcoming spring.

All I ask for is a whale boat and sledge, manned by six hands, with the requisite equipment of stores, fuel,

provisions, clothing, &c., and the command of the party, with which it was my original intention to have proposed proceeding direct to Smith Sound, and devoting the ensuing autumn to the exploration of that inlet as far up as the season would admit of, wintering there in a log hut taken out for the purpose, so as to be enabled in the following spring to extend the search over the ice by sledging; and in the event of Smith Sound opening into the Polar Ocean, which I believe it does, and the heavy swell setting out of it (as indicated in the admiralty chart of Baffin's Bay, published in the same Return to the House of Commons in which my own former plans appeared, and dated March 1850.) is strongly in support of such an opinion, and by shaping a westerly course, a junction might possibly be effected with the searching parties employed up the Wellington Channel.

I find, however, that the Arctic Council have recommended that the future search shall be exclusively confined to the Wellington Channel, and that a squadron of ships be sent out in that direction. Moreover, an objection might be made to the attempt to explore Smith's Sound from Baffin's Bay, on the ground that the entrance to it has never been seen clear of ice, but were such the fact I know not how we are to account for the heavy swell.

Under these circumstances I most willingly volunteer my services to go out in any one of the vessels to Wellington Channel, there to commence the search in the reverse order, round *Cape Sir John Franklin*, northward or eastward, as the land may trend, exploring in the direction of the meridian of Smith and Jones Sounds for any corresponding openings to the Polar Ocean, into which the missing ships may have been driven under the influence of adverse winds and currents, whilst helplessly beset in heavily and closely packed ice.

Such a branch enterprise, carried out at the same time with the still more important one to the westward round Cape Lady Franklin, and which will doubtless be the main object of the next general expedition, would by providing for every contingency, promise the best possible chance of restoring to their friends and country all that remains to be saved of our brave and enterprising countrymen.

R. M'CORMICK,
Surgeon, R.N.

Twickenham, 20th January 1852.

No. 3.

MEMORANDUM enclosed in Dr. M'CORMICK's Letter of 1 January 1850.

IN the month of April last, I laid before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty a plan of search for the missing Expedition under the command of Captain Sir John Franklin, by means of a Boat Expedition up Jones' and Smith's Sounds, volunteering myself to conduct it.

In that plan I stated the reasons which had induced me to direct my attention more especially to the openings at the head of Baffin's Bay, which at the time were not included within the general scheme of search.

Wellington Channel, however, of all the probable openings into the Polar Sea, possesses the highest degree of interest, and the exploration of which is of paramount importance, I should most unquestionably have comprised within my plan of search, had not Her Majesty's ships "Enterprise" and "Investigator" been employed at the time in Barrow's Straits for the express purpose of examining this inlet and Cape Walker, two of the most essential points of search in the whole track of the "Erebus" and "Terror" to the westward; being those points at the very threshold of his enterprise, from which Sir John Franklin would take his departure from the known to the unknown, whether he shaped a south-westerly course from the latter, or attempted the passage in a higher latitude from the former point.

The return of the Sea Expedition from Port Leopold, and the overland one from the Mackenzie River, both alike unsuccessful in their search, leaves the fate of the gallant Franklin and his companions as problematical as ever; in fact, the case stands precisely as it did two years ago; the work is yet to be begun; everything remains to be accomplished.

In renewal of the search in the ensuing spring, more would be accomplished in boats than in any other way, not only by Behring's Straits, but from the eastward. For the difficulties attendant on icy navigation, which form so insuperable a barrier to the progress of ships, would be readily surmounted by boats; by means of which the coast line may be closely examined for cairns of stones, under which Sir John Franklin would most indubitably deposit memorials of his progress in all prominent positions, as opportunities might offer.

The discovery of one of these mementos would, in all probability, afford a clue that might lead to the rescue of our enterprising countrymen, ere another and sixth winter close in upon them, should they be still in existence; and the time has not yet arrived for abandoning hope.

In renewing once more the offer of my services, which I do most cheerfully, I see no reason for changing the opinions I entertained last spring; subsequent events have only tended to confirm them. I then believed, and I do so still, after a long and mature consideration of the subject, that Sir John Franklin's ships have been arrested in a high latitude, and beset in the heavy polar ice northward of the Parry Islands, and that their probable course thither has been through the Wellington Channel, or one of the Sounds at the northern extremity of Baffin's Bay.

This appears to me to be the only view of the case that can in any way account for the entire absence of all tidings of them throughout so protracted a period of time (unless all have perished by some sudden and overwhelming catastrophe).

Isolated as their position would be under such circumstances, any attempt to reach the continent of America at such a distance would be hopeless in the extreme; and the mere chance of any party from the ships reaching the top of Baffin's Bay at the very moment of a whaler's brief and uncertain visit would be attended with by far too great a risk to justify the attempt, for failure would ensure inevitable destruction to the whole party; therefore their only alternative would be to keep together in their ships, should no disaster have happened to them, and by husbanding their remaining resources, eke them out with whatever wild animals may come within their reach.

Had Sir John Franklin been able to shape a south-westerly course from Cape Walker, as directed by his instructions, the probability is, some intelligence of him would have reached this country ere this (nearly five years having already elapsed since his departure from it). Parties would have been sent out from his ships, either in the direction of the coast of America or Barrow's Straits, whichever happened to be the most accessible. Esquimaux would have been fallen in with, and tidings of the long absent Expedition have been obtained.

Failing in penetrating beyond Cape Walker, Sir John Franklin would have left some notice of his future intentions on that spot, or the nearest accessible one to it; and should he then retrace his course for the Wellington Channel, the most probable conjecture, he would not pass up that inlet without depositing a further account of his proceedings, either on the western or eastern point of the entrance to it.

Therefore, should my proposal meet with their Lordships' approbation, I would most respectfully submit, that the party I have volunteered to conduct should be landed at the entrance to the Wellington Channel, or the nearest point attainable by any ship that their Lordships may deem fit to employ in a future search, consistently with any other services that ship may have to perform; and should a landing be effected on the eastern side, I would propose commencing the search from Cape Riley or Beechey Island in a northerly direction, carefully examining every remarkable headland and indentation of the western coast of North Devon for memorials of the missing Expedition; I would then cross over the Wellington Channel, and continue the search along the northern shore of Cornwallis Island, extending the exploration to the westward as far as the remaining portion of the season would permit, so as to secure the retreat of the party before the winter set in, returning either by the eastern or western side of Cornwallis Island, as circumstances might indicate to be the most desirable at the time, after ascertaining the general extent and trending of the shores of that island.

As, however, it would be highly desirable that Jones' Sound should not be omitted in the search, more especially as a whaler, last season, reached its entrance and reported it open, I would further propose, that the ship conveying the exploring party out should look into this opening on her way to Lancaster's Sound, if circumstances permitted of her doing so early in the season; and, if found to be free from ice, the attempt might be made by the Boat Expedition to push through it to the westward in this latitude; and should it prove to be an opening into the Polar Sea, of which I think there can be little doubt, a great saving of time and distance would be accomplished. Failing in this, the ship should be secured in some central position in the vicinity of the Wellington Channel, as a *point d'appui* to fall back upon in the search from that quarter.

Twickenham, 1st January 1850.

(Signed) R. M'CORMICK, R. N.

COPY of a LETTER from Dr. M'CORMICK to the Secretary of the Admiralty.

11, Apsley Cottages, Twickenham Green,
20 February 1850.

Sir,

I BEG leave to transmit herewith, for the approval of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, a list of the crew, gear, and provisions and clothing requisite for the equipment of the Boat Expedition, which I have volunteered to conduct in search of Her Majesty's ships "Erebus" and "Terror," under the command of Captain Sir John Franklin.

The boat I should prefer for this service would be one similar, in the materials of its construction, to the boat used by Sir Edward Parry, in his attempt to reach the North Pole in the year 1827; but this I must leave to the superior judgment of their Lordships. The timbers in that boat were of tough ash and hickory, with Mackintosh's waterproof canvas, and oak and fir planking over all, and having a runner on each side of the keel shod with smooth steel. The boat I would propose should be built after the model of a whale-boat, 25 feet in length and 5 feet beam in the extreme breadth; the crew to consist of a petty officer, a carpenter, and four able seamen.

The route which I am the most desirous and anxious to follow is by the Wellington Channel; so strongly impressed am I with the conviction that it affords one of the best chances of crossing the track of the missing Expedition, for the reasons already stated in my plan, now under their Lordships' consideration.

To carry out this plan efficiently, the boat should be dropped by the ship conveying the searching party out at the entrance to the Wellington Channel in Barrow Straits; from this point one or both sides of that channel and the northern shores of the Parry islands might be explored as far west as the season would permit of. But should the ship be enabled to look into Jones' Sound, on her way to Lancaster's Sound, and find that opening free from ice, an attempt might be made by the Boat Expedition to push through it into the Wellington Channel. In the event, however, of its proving to be merely an inlet, which a short delay would be sufficient to decide, the ship might perhaps be in readiness to pick up the boat on its return, for conveyance to its ultimate destination through Lancaster's Sound, or as a precaution against any unforeseen separation from the ship, a dépôt of provisions should be left at the entrance to Jones' Sound for the boat to complete its supplies from, after accomplishing the exploration of this inlet, and to afford the means, if compelled from an advanced period of the season or other adverse circumstances of reaching some place of refuge, either on board a whaler or some one of the dépôts of provisions on the southern shores of Barrow Straits.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. M'CORMICK, R.N.

Equipment for the Boat.

Boat's gear, awning, tarpaulings, &c.
Carpenter's tools and vulcanised Indian rubber for repairs.
Six fowling-pieces and ammunition.
Arm chest and magazine.
Harpoons and net.
Compass, chronometer, and quadrant.
Thermometers and aneroid barometer.
Box of stationery.
Tent and Smith's Orion belts.
Halkett's boats (large and small sizes).
Two of Sir Edward Parry's sledges.
Cooking apparatus, and knives, forks, and spoons.
Gutta percha cups and plates.
Weighing dial and measures.

Provisions.

(Rations for each man per diem.)

Pemmican - - - - - 12 oz.
Preserved meats, soups, and vegetables - 12 „

Provisions—continued.

Biscuit - - - - - 1 lb.
Cocoa powder, sweetened - - - 1 oz.
Chocolate - - - - - 1 „
Tea - - - - - $\frac{1}{2}$ „
Sugar - - - - - 1 „
Rum - - - - - $\frac{1}{2}$ gill.
Tobacco - - - - - $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.
Spirits of wine for fuel - - - 1 pint.

Clothing.

Fur caps and south-westerns, of each - - 7 no.
Fur dresses for sleeping in - - - 7 „
Suits of pilot cloth - - - - 7 „
Cloth boots and moccasins - - - 14 pairs.
Mittens and stout stockings - - - 14 „
Guernsey frocks and flannel shirts - - 14 „
Flannel drawers and comforters - - 14 „
Blanket bags for sleeping in - - - 7 „

(Signed) R. M'C.

No. 5.

MEMORANDUM by the Hydrographer of the Admiralty on Dr. M'CORMICK's proposed Boat Expedition.

DR. M'CORMICK has shown so much heart and perseverance in urging his project for the relief of the "Erebus" and "Terror," that there can be no doubt that he would execute it with commensurate zeal and resolution; and though it does not appear to me that Jones' Sound or the Wellington Channel are the most likely places to find those ships, yet in the fifth year of their absence every place should be searched, and I therefore submit that this plan would cost but little, as a rider upon some other Expedition by the eastern route. If their Lordship should consent to Captain Penny's offer of proceeding to Lancaster Sound in his whaling vessel, perhaps the doctor might be despatched with him, according to the position they might find occupied by the ice: they would be able to determine at which point of his proposed circuit it would be most prudent for him to land, and they would arrange at what place he should be picked up.

(Signed) F. B.

No. 6.

OUTLINE of a Plan of a Boat Expedition in Search of Sir JOHN FRANKLIN'S Expedition.

HER Majesty's ship "North Star," recently commissioned for the purpose of taking out an additional supply of provisions to Lancaster Sound, for the use of the arctic ships now absent, offers so favourable an opportunity for making another effort to ascertain the fate of Sir John Franklin's Expedition, and that, too, without in any way impeding the particular service in which the "North Star" is to be employed, or even involving the necessity of that ship's wintering in the ice.

I feel it my duty, as an officer who has been employed in former Expeditions, and devoted many years past to the subject of Polar discovery, to suggest, that Jones' and Smith's Sounds, at the head of Baffin's Bay, should be carefully examined by a Boat Expedition; but more especially the former, it being the first opening north of the entrance to Lancaster Sound.

These openings to the Polar Sea, although most important ones, still remain unexplored, not coming within the sphere of search of any of the Expeditions at present employed in those seas. That they are important ones, I need only quote the opinion entertained by Colonel Sabine, one of the best authorities on this subject, who states, in a letter to the Admiralty, that "it was Sir John Franklin's intention, if foiled at one point, to try in succession all the probable openings into a more navigable part of the Polar Sea. The range of coast is considerable in which memorials of the ships' progress would have to be sought for, extending from Melville Island, in the west, to the Great Sound, at the head of Baffin's Bay, in the east." The same authority told Lady Franklin, that Sir John Franklin mentioned to him, that if he were baffled in every thing else, he might perhaps look into the Sounds north of Baffin's Bay before he returned home.

The intense anxiety and apprehension now so generally entertained for the safety of Sir John Franklin, and the crews of the "Erebus" and "Terror" under his command, who, if still in existence, are now passing through the severe ordeal of a fourth winter in those inclement regions, imperatively calls for every available effort to be made for their rescue from a position so perilous; and as long as one possible avenue to that position remains unsearched, the country will not feel satisfied that every thing has been done which perseverance and experience can accomplish to dispel the mystery which at present surrounds their fate.

The plan I propose is neither difficult or expensive in the accomplishment. Jones' Sound is within the short distance of about 100 miles of Lancaster's Sound; and Smith's Sound is scarcely as much farther north of Jones' Sound. The "North Star" ought to arrive there about the beginning of August, which month, with part of September, would leave nearly two of the best months of the year for the examination of one or both these Sounds to their probable termination in the Polar Sea. Jones' Sound, with the Wellington Channel, on the west, may be found to form an island of the land called "North Devon." All prominent positions on both sides of these Sounds should be searched for flag staves and piles of stones, under which copper cylinders or bottles may have been deposited, containing accounts of the proceedings of the missing Expedition; and if successful in getting upon its track, a clue would be obtained to the fate of our gallant countrymen.

The searching party should commence its return in time to reach the entrance of Jones' Sound at an appointed time and place, at which the "North Star" should be directed to call, after she had delivered her

stores for the ships in Lancaster's Sound. The latter part of September would be early enough for her final departure (so as to secure her from being beset for the winter), as that month is well known to be the best period of the year for navigating Baffin's Bay.

Having already twice volunteered my services to the Admiralty as long ago as the year 1847, to be employed in the general search for the lost Expedition, I need scarcely add how happy I shall be to conduct such a Boat Expedition as the one I have proposed. All that I should require for the performance of such a service would be an open boat—a whale boat would, perhaps, be the best, with a tent and stove, and the requisite equipment for her crew, six in number.

And further, should it be found necessary to continue the search in the following year, I am ready to winter on the coast, in a log hut, supplied with sufficient fuel, provisions and clothing for the existence of my small party through a polar winter, or on board the "North Star," should it ultimately be deemed desirable that vessel should remain out.

Should this outline of my plan meet with approval, I am prepared to furnish a more detailed statement.

(Signed) R. M'CORMICK,
Surgeon, R.N.

11, Craven Street, 21 April 1849.

No. 7.

Walpole Lynn, Norfolk,
18 April 1849.

Dear M'Cormick

I NEED scarcely say that I greatly admire the zeal which has prompted you to propose an additional plan for obtaining information respecting Sir John Franklin's Expedition, and that I consider any proposition coming from one so well acquainted with the polar regions as yourself well worthy of attention, more especially when you offer your own services in putting it into execution.

I will now give you my deliberate opinion as to the utility and practicability of the plan you have submitted to me.

There can be no doubt as to the importance, and, considering our increasing anxiety respecting Sir John Franklin, I could almost say the necessity, of examining the various Sounds and Inlets between Lancaster's Sound and the head of Baffin's Bay.

More especially, as Jones' Sound is said to have been recently entered by a whaler, and found to extend a considerable distance to the westward.

Among the probabilities to which we are now driven, there is none more likely than that Sir John Franklin may have tried some one of those inlets, after failing in Lancaster's Sound.

Then, as to your plan of effecting this examination, I am decidedly of opinion that, so long as the summer remains open, by which I mean until young ice begins to form a serious impediment in shore, there is more to be done by a well-equipped boat than in any other way; both as regards certainty of progress and actual safety, more is to be done in close examination in a boat than in a ship, as I have more than once found by experience.

Two questions then arise—

1st. What time would you have for effecting this object, supposing you went out in the "North Star"?

2d. What prospect of securing your retreat, or of wintering in safety?

I am decidedly of opinion that the "North Star" cannot for one moment be permitted to go out of her course (*i. e.*, to be diverted from her main object of delivering provisions to the "Investigator," in order to land any resources for you at the mouth of Lancaster's Sound, much less at any place to the northward of it).

I am more and more confident that the "North Star" will have little or no time left after delivering her stores (which is no easy job), and if she has, we have proposed that she shall be employed under Captain Bird to carry on the search; so that either in the case of her coming home this year or not, you could get no help from her; none, I mean, independently of her delivering of stores to the "Investigator," or in such other place as circumstances may render necessary as the general dépôt for Sir James Ross's Expedition.

It is therefore perfectly clear to my mind, that your prospect of being provided for during the winter must depend upon your reaching the "Investigator," or some known dépôt of provisions, either at Port Leopold, or some point on the south shore of Lancaster's Sound, before the winter sets in. I feel confident that if you trust to any other resource, you will be disappointed.

It follows, then, in my view, that you must leave the "North Star" at the entrance of Lancaster's Sound with what your boat will stow, and that you must return in time to some known dépôt of provisions, independently of anything to be specially deposited for you, for it is impossible for the "North Star" to execute a third object this season.

If, therefore, the "North Star" should succeed in reaching Lancaster's Sound (as I once did) in the early part of August, you might do a great deal in the six weeks following, and secure your own retreat; if much later, you could do so much the less, and perhaps incur so much the greater risk.

These are my general views, and I do not entertain them lightly.

Upon the whole, I do think it would be worth while to let you have a boat to make the attempt; this would cost little, in any way, even it failed, and I should be glad to see so much ardour as you possess employed in this humane and noble cause.

R. M'Cormick, Esq.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. E. PARRY.

No. 8.

OUTLINE of a PLAN of an Overland Journey to the Polar Sea, by the Way of the Coppermine River, in Search of Sir JOHN FRANKLIN's Expedition, 1847.

IF Sir John Franklin, guided by his instructions, has passed through Barrow's Straits, and shaped a south-westerly course, from the meridian of Cape Walker, with the intention of gaining the northern coast of the continent of America, and so passing through the Dolphin and Union Straits, along the shore of that continent, to Behring's Straits;

His greatest risk of detention by the ice throughout this course would be found between the parallels of 74° and 69° north latitude, and the meridians of 100° and 110° west longitude, or, in other words, that portion of the North-west passage which yet remains unexplored, occupying the space between the western coast of Boothia on the one side, and the island or islands forming Banks' and Victoria Lands on the other.

Should the "Erebus" and "Terror" have been beset in the heavy drift ice, or wrecked amongst it and the broken land, which in all probability exists there, whilst contending with the prevalent westerly winds in this quarter;

The Coppermine River would decidedly offer the most direct route and nearest approach to that portion of the Polar Sea, and, after crossing Coronation Gulf, the average breadth of the Strait between the Continent and Victoria Land is only about 22 miles.

From this point a careful search should be commenced in the direction of Banks' Land; the intervening space between it and Victoria Land, occupying about 5 degrees, or little more than 300 miles, could, I think, be accomplished in one season, and a retreat to winter quarters effected before the winter set in. As the ice in the Coppermine River breaks up in June, the searching party ought to reach the sea by the beginning of August, which would leave two of the best months of the year for exploring the Polar Sea, viz. August and September.

As it would be highly desirable that every available day, to the latest period of the season, should be devoted to the search, I should propose wintering on the coast in the vicinity of the mouth of the Coppermine River, which would also afford a favourable position from which to re-commence the search in the following spring, should the first season prove unsuccessful.

Of course the object of such an Expedition as I have proposed is not with the view of taking supplies to such a numerous party as Sir John Franklin has under his command; but to find out his position, and acquaint him where a depôt of provisions would be stored up for himself and crews at my proposed winter quarters, where a party should be left to build a house, establish a fishery, and hunt for game, during the absence of the searching party.

To carry out this plan efficiently, the Hudson's Bay Company should be requested to lend their powerful co-operation in furnishing guides, supplies of pemmican, &c., for the party on their route and at winter quarters. Without entering into details here, I may observe, that I should consider one boat, combining the necessary requisites in her construction to fit her for either the river navigation or that of the shores of the Polar Sea, would be quite sufficient, with a crew one half sailors, and the other half Canadian boatmen; the latter to be engaged at Montreal, for which place I would propose leaving England in the month of February.

Should such an Expedition even fail in its main object, the discovery of the position of the missing ships and their crews, the long sought-for Polar Passage might be accomplished.

Woolwich, 1847.

(Signed) R. M'CORMICK, R.N.



Reference.

- Place of Encampment
- Cairn & Monument
- Boat Track (Red)
- Sledge Track (D)
- Coast explored by the 'Forlorn Hope' (Blue)
- According to Admiralty Chart (Black)
- Spot on which a night was passed in the Snow Drift, during a Gale of Wind with the Therm. 32° below Zero, in an excursion to Caswall Tower.
- (Bay of Refuge) named in the Admiralty Chart Mc Cormick Bay in honour of the Zeal & Labour of the Doctor by whom it was discovered during this Perilous Voyage. F Beaufort.

Nov 5th 1853

Position of the Prince of Wales August 13th 1848 according to Captain Lee having come up Jones Sound and visited a Cairn, Cooking place & foot-prints.

NORTH DEVON

TRACK CHART
of the East Coast of
WELLINGTON CHANNEL,
and the
SHORES OF BARING BAY,
Explored by
R. M. CORMICK, F.R.C.S., R.N.
Commanding
H.M. BOAT "FORLORN HOPE",
In Search of
SIR JOHN FRANKLIN,
1852.



Corwallis Land

Frederick Island

Cape Spencer

The Quarters of the Expedition

Cape Kuley

Wilmington Channel

From a Sketch taken by Dr. R. M. CURMICK, R.N. Commanding the Boat Expedition up Wilmington Channel in Search of Franklin

LAST PLAN OF SEARCH
FOR THE DISCOVERY OF THE FATE OF SIR JOHN FRANKLIN'S EXPEDITION,
LAI'D BEFORE THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS OF THE ADMIRALTY
 AND THE
 ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY,
 BY
ROBERT M'CORMICK, F.R.C.S., R.N.,
 JANUARY 6, 1857.

Reasons for a renewal of the search for further traces of the Franklin Expedition, and
 the various routes by which that search may be carried out, considered in
 reference to the most eligible plan for reaching the area to
 be explored, comprising King William's Land
 and the coasts adjacent.

The accidental discovery of the relics left in the hands of the Esquimaux, at the mouth of the Great Fish River, by that gallant band of toilworn and famishing men, the forlorn hope of 40 out of the 138 noble fellows that constituted the crews of the ill-fated "Erebus" and "Terror," gives a new and important feature to the search,—a definite spot on which to concentrate our efforts; a clue which, if zealously and judiciously followed up, cannot fail to lead to the discovery of the fate which befel our long-lost countrymen.

What a startling narrative of adventures and discovery, what a thrilling tale of suffering and woe, may not the recovery of a record of their wanderings unfold; though the hand that penned it, and the hands that buried it, be long ago cold and inanimate as the cairn of stones beneath which that record may lie concealed amid the frozen, snow-clad cliffs overhanging the ice-bound shores of King William's Land, or the banks of the Great Fish River? The probability of finding such a document would, in itself, justify the prosecution of a further search, were there no other reasons for continuing it. In the present crisis, however, it cannot be said to be the only one. The relatives and friends of the lost ones, still poised between hope and despair, in that painful position of suspense and anxiety, worse than the dread reality itself, cling, naturally enough, to what I fear must now be considered delusive hope that survivors will be found—a hope, nevertheless, held out not by the inexperienced and unreflecting alone, but by those whose position and judgment give influence and weight to their opinions, and whose sanguine temperaments make them reluctant to resign that hope so long as mystery remains, albeit the twelfth year of this sad mystery is drawing to a close.

In again pressing for another search, I need scarcely say that I do so solely from a sincere and firm conviction in my own mind of the necessity for it, ere this much vexed question can possibly be set at rest for ever. As a Surgeon in the Royal Navy, I presume no selfish or interested motives can be imputed to me, seeing that I belong to a class hitherto excluded from sharing in the promotions which have been so liberally bestowed on officers of every other grade, on the return of each successive expedition: albeit the Surgeon, no matter whether he conducted a successful expedition himself, or was one of the discoverers of a Polar Passage, a Surgeon he remains.

The area to be searched for records is now reduced to within very circumscribed limits, and may be comprised within the parallels of 67° and 74° of latitude, and the meridians of 94° and 100° of longitude. Within this

space lie Peel's Sound, King William's Land, the western coast of Boothia, and the estuary of the Great Fish River, King William's Land itself occupying about 4 degrees of longitude, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ degrees of latitude. This area of search may be approached from each of the four cardinal points of the compass.

From the west, by Behring's Strait; from the east, by Hudson's Bay; from the north, by Barrow's Strait; and from the south, by the Great Fish River.

The first route, by Behring's Strait, may be at once discarded, as it is now *too late* in the season for any attempt in that direction. The vast distance also to the sphere of action is, of itself, a great objection to this route; for, under the most favourable circumstances, not less than nine or ten months must be sacrificed on the passage out; and although a ship's reaching even King William's Land in the same season comes within the range of possibility, it needs no very profound knowledge or experience in ice-navigation to foresee that this must greatly depend upon a favourable season. Nothing in nature is more capricious than the movements of ice, under the influence, at all times, of winds and currents. Strange fatality! that the "Enterprise's" sledge parties should have been within the short distance of *forty-five* miles of King William's Land without reaching its shores,—shores now so replete with interest. Yet in the vicinity of Cambridge Bay, their winter quarters, *only* 120 miles off, a door-hatch and a piece of iron, supposed to have belonged to the "Erebus" and "Terror," appear to have been found.

The second route, by Hudson's Bay, presents three openings; two of them, Chesterfield Inlet and Wager River, run up in the direction of the Great Fish River, but the intervening space, though of no great extent, which separates them from the latter river, is said to be rough ground, unfavourable for travelling. The third, Repulse Bay, involves a long overland journey for the transit of a boat of a size required for the navigation of the western sea, first, across the isthmus into Committee Bay, and from thence over Franklin Isthmus to Castor and Pollux River.

The third route, by Barrow's Strait, offers the choice of three avenues to King William's Land and the Great Fish River—by Melville Sound, Peel's Sound, and Regent's Inlet. Melville Sound, situate to the westward of Cape Walker, in the longitude of 105° west, is, from the report of the sledging party that explored it, *not navigable* for ships at any period of the year, being beset by tremendous ice, frozen to the bottom, and rising in hummocks from fifteen to twenty-five feet in height, the land low, with off-lying shoals at the bottom of the Sound, about fifty miles of which was not explored, but supposed to be *continuous*. Peel's Sound, lying between North Somerset and Cape Walker, in the longitude of 96° , was also examined by sledging parties, down to the latitude of 73° (180 miles beyond this remain unexplored), holds out little better prospect for the passage of a ship, from the character given in the report—that it is filled with undisturbed, smooth floe-ice, aground, exhibiting no appearance of pressure or tide marks along its flat shores, and rarely, if ever, open to navigation. The smooth ice, however, would be favourable for sledging over, with a ship secured in one of the inlets of the coast of North Somerset, for the party to fall back upon.

Regent's Inlet, in the longitude of 90° West, appears to me the most promising of all the avenues of approach to the area of search. We know that this inlet is *really* navigable for ships, Sir Edward Parry having, in the month of August, in the year 1819, passed as far down it, with the "Hecla" and "Griper," as Cape Kater, about the latitude of Brentford Bay and Bellot Strait; and the "Victory, in the autumn of the year 1829, reached Felix Harbour, at the bottom of the Gulf of Boothia.

I would, therefore, suggest that a small vessel, of some 50 tons burthen, fore and aft rigged, with a crew of a dozen Greenland seamen, and two mates, besides the officer in command, stored and provisioned for eighteen months, should leave this country about Midsummer day, proceed down Prince Regent's Inlet as far as Brentford Bay, and, on the vessel being secured there, a boat and sledge expedition pass at once through the Strait of Bellot into the Western Sea, explore the coast of Boothia down to the magnetic pole, from thence crossing over to Cape Felix, circumnavigate the shores of King William's Land by boat or sledge, as the presence of water

er ice may indicate; and if successful in discovering a record or other traces of the lost expedition, and the season an open and favourable one, might *possibly* return to England the same year.

The vessel I have proposed may appear small for such an enterprise. Baffin, however, in the old "Discovery," a vessel of not greater tonnage, made the circuit of the bay which bears his name, and accomplished more in a few months than have been done since by more ostentatious expeditions. The advantages of a small vessel over a large one are manifold;—her smaller draught of water, her less liability to injury in a nip, the facility with which she may be worked in narrow leads amongst ice, or beached to repair damages, a smaller crew to provide for, great saving of expense in the general equipment, and lastly, in the event of any disaster to the ship, the smaller the party, the better the chance of escape.

Within the area to be searched for records, I do not for one moment expect to find either the "Erebus" or "Terror;" I should just as soon think of looking for them at the South Pole, as at King William's Land. I am, nevertheless, fully aware that this is by no means the general impression, and that I am making a bold assertion. I would ask, however, how these ships got there, if Peel and Melville Sounds are *never navigable* at any season of the year? for such is the report of the officers who explored these openings. Through what channel, then, could the ships have passed, unless they had *anticipated* the discovery of the North-west Passage by penetrating *Prince of Wales' Strait*? What were they doing during the long interval of *four* years, unaccounted for, from their departure from winter quarters, at Beechey Island, to the discovery of the relics at the mouth of the Great Fish River? Is it probable that in any position these ships could have been placed in, *south* of Barrow's Straits,—the distance is not so great,—*four years* would have been allowed to elapse without an attempt to communicate with the Hudson's Bay settlements? and if such an attempt had been made, can we reasonably suppose that out of the two fine ships' companies, numbering 138 men, for years inured to hardship and exposure, not one should have succeeded in the undertaking?

It is more, I think, than ever probable that Sir John Franklin, after making every effort to carry out his Instructions, which he most assuredly would do, as long as there was a chance of doing so, finally, finding himself baffled in all his attempts to penetrate those impracticable openings to the southward and westward, attempted the *second course* pointed out to him by his Instructions,—the *Wellington Channel*—which, with Smith and Jones' Sounds, I long ago anticipated would be found to open into that vast Polar Ocean, the existence of which the late Arctic explorations of the Americans have *confirmed*, which doubtless forms *the* Polar passage uniting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, not by narrow and tortuous straits, as in the more southern latitudes, but by an ocean uniting oceans—as the greatest of all Arctic geographers, the talented and immortal Sir John Barrow, the historian of Arctic discovery, long ago announced as a Polar basin.

In so vast a region, extending over some seventy degrees of longitude, from Wellington Channel to Behring Strait, we know not what discoveries may have been made in that four years of mystery. The Pole itself may have been reached, for aught we know to the contrary, ere the catastrophe happened to the ships, which drove the forlorn hope of forty men, as a last resource, to reach the shores of America, or perish by the way. I believe that they came down Wellington Channel, over the floe, which, on breaking up, would leave no trace behind to mark their weary way. That, revisiting their old winter quarters at Beechey Island, they found the boat which they were seen dragging along when the Esquimaux fell in with them at the mouth of the Great Fish River. That Sir John Franklin, before he launched his ships upon the dangerous navigation of an unknown and ice-encumbered sea, would, as a precautionary measure, leave a boat and *câche* of provisions behind him to meet any emergency arising out of disaster to his ships, seems to me more than probable. Sir Edward Parry, I know, did this, in his attempt to reach the North Pole in the year 1827, having myself assisted in hauling the boat over the ice, which was left, with the *câche* of provisions, on Red Beach, Spitzbergen, when the "Hecla" was beset in the pack-ice. When I first saw the "tent-circles" at Cape Riley, it struck me that the site selected was a very out-of-the-way one for making magnetic observations, with the ships lying at the very opposite extremity of

the Bay, and having above three miles of rugged, hummocky ice intervening between them and Cape Riley, when a far more eligible spot presented itself on the narrow spit of shingle on which the graves are situated, dividing Erebus and Terror Bay from Union Bay, and close to the anchorage of the ships. Here, indeed, was found the ground plan of a building, which I think had obviously been the magnetic observatory.

These remarks are not hazarded without some little acquaintance with the subject to justify them, having myself been engaged in the voyage to the Antarctic seas, undertaken for magnetic purposes, when this same "Erebus" had been my ocean home for four long years. The "tent-circles," both at Cape Riley and at the south-eastern extremity of Beechey Island, appeared to me more likely to have formed the temporary encampment of a travelling party, watching for a favourable opportunity of crossing Barrow's Strait. Prince Regent's Inlet and Peel's Sound, being about equi-distant, would, either of them, lead a party to the Great Fish River; and the cairn of empty preserved meat canisters found on Beechey Island may have been erected by that party to beguile the weary hours spent in waiting for a passage across the Strait.

In conclusion, I may add that some such a small sea expedition as the one I have proposed, down Regent's Inlet and through the Strait of Bellot, in conjunction with an overland one down the Great Fish River, would appear to me to combine more of the elements of success than any single expedition, though of more ostentatious pretensions, whether by sea or land.

The only apology I have to offer for having entered so elaborately upon the subject of this hapless search must rest upon the deep feelings of interest that have actuated me, for years past, in my endeavours to dispel the mystery which hangs over it. It is now ten years since I laid before the Board of Admiralty my first Plan of Search, down the Coppermine River, for the purpose of exploring the very region where relics of our unhappy countrymen have since been found. It is now eight years since I laid another Plan before the same Board, for exploring Jones' and Smith's Sounds into the Polar Ocean, since carried out by the Americans,—my own views *confirmed*, but the *honour won* for *another* country. Above three years have elapsed since my return from my boat expedition up the Wellington Channel, and two years, on the 23rd of last October, since I last volunteered my services to their Lordships, to follow up the search for relics, at the moment the discovery of them was first announced.

And now, in proposing my present plan of search by Regent's Inlet and the Strait of Bellot, the greatest proof I can give of my devotion to this noble cause is the offer of my own services to conduct it, which I do most willingly, should that plan meet with the approval of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, and long experience in icy seas, combined with an intimate acquaintance with natural history, geology, and geography; a profession superseding the necessity for the special appointment of a medical officer; and the having already had charge of an expedition in the search, be considered fitting qualifications for such an undertaking.

Pemba Cottage, Surbiton-on-Thames, Jan. 6th, 1857.

R. M'CORMICK, Surgeon R.N.

Admiralty, 14th January, 1857.

SIR,

I have received and laid before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty your letter of the 6th inst., requesting employment with an Expedition in search of further traces of Sir John Franklin, and enclosing your reasons for a renewal of the search.

I am, sir, your very humble servant,

THOMAS PHINN.

R. M'CORMICK, Esq., Surgeon, R.N.,
Pemba Cottage, Surbiton, Surrey.

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